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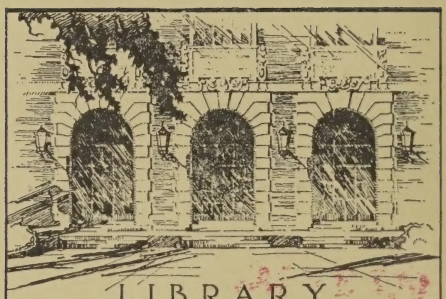

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BROADWAY TRANSLATIONS

"*Age cannot wither her, nor custom stale*
Her infinite variety."

TO

A. E. HOUSMAN

"To whom this book as honour due?
Surely Apollo's bays belong,
In Latin and in English song,
To you."

Broadway Translations

MARTIAL

THE TWELVE BOOKS OF EPIGRAMS

Translated by

J. A. POTT, M.A.

and

F. A. WRIGHT, M.A.

CLASSICAL DEPARTMENT, BIRKBECK COLLEGE

With an Introduction by the latter

LONDON

GEORGE ROUTLEDGE & SONS LTD.

NEW YORK: E. P. DUTTON & CO.

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY
THE EDINBURGH PRESS, 9 AND 11 YOUNG STREET, EDINBURGH

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PREFACE

At the time of his lamented death in 1920, John Arthur Pott was engaged on a complete translation, in verse and prose, of the Epigrams of Martial. The manuscript, about half completed, was left to his friend, Mr W. R. Smale of Radley College, and he, after reading it through, and in part revising it, has decided that, for the moment, the publication of the verse renderings only is advisable.

In memory of an accomplished poet and scholar I have endeavoured to finish his work to the best of my ability, and have added a short Introduction, my own versions being marked with an asterisk.

F. A. W.

Gen Rec English

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INTRODUCTION

I

LIFE OF MARTIAL

MARCUS VALERIUS MARTIALIS was born about the year A.D. 40, during the short reign of the Emperor Caius, in the Spanish town of Bilbilis. The name by which he is now commonly known was probably due to the accident of his birth occurring on the first of March: 'Marcus Valerius' forms part of the Roman dress which his countrymen soon after the time of Julius Caesar had so readily adopted. In the first century of our era Spain passed through one of those periods of intellectual activity which diversify the torpor wherein that strange land normally reposes, and Martial is but one of the group of brilliant Spaniards who are among the chief glories of the silver age of Latin literature. Two of the galaxy, the critic Quintilian, born at Calagurris A.D. 40, and the poet Lucan, born at Cordova A.D. 39, were his close contemporaries, and when, abandoning Bilbilis and the rushing Salo, he came to Italy to seek his fortune in 63, Seneca had reached the highest point of his long and magnificent career and seemed all-powerful at Rome. As a humble dependent of the Senecas, and through them of the Pisos, the most literary of all the great Roman families, Martial made his first entry into Roman life; and when in 65 B.C. on the discovery of the conspiracy Seneca and Piso were involved in a common ruin, the young stranger from Spain shared their downfall in his small degree, and was thrown upon his own resources. For many years existence for him must have been as hard a struggle as it was for Charles Dickens in his youth, and both writers owe much of their power to the forced realization of the most important fact in life, that a man must in some way or another get enough to eat. Being a Roman citizen Martial had a certain value as a client—if he could find a patron willing to employ him—but a

client's pay, whether it took the form of rations or dole, was almost as scanty and precarious as that which a sandwich-man or a 'super' earns to-day. Moreover, competition in that particular branch of social service was excessively severe, for anyone then could be a client just as anyone now can be a clerk: there were only three requisites, a respectable appearance, a decent suit of clothes, and a dislike for hard manual labour. Probably it was his pen that saved Martial from starvation, and the couplets that now appear as Books Thirteen and Fourteen of the Epigrams, tags written to order, like our cracker mottoes, for the presents that were usually given at the Saturnalia, performed at least one useful function; they kept our poet alive. Moreover they gained for him some sort of reputation, and when the Colosseum was opened by the Emperor Titus in the year A.D. 80 a publisher was found ready to risk his first small book '*Liber Spectaculorum*', a set of thirty-two short poems describing the games, the contests, and all the other wonders of the great building.

'The Spectacles' mark the turning-point in Martial's fortunes. Though they are of small literary value they had a considerable success, and, attracting imperial notice, brought to Martial such privileges as accompanied the grant of 'father's right', *ius trium liberorum*. His social position was now assured and his poetical fame also quickly increased, so that he was able in A.D. 84 to publish and sell the collection of his gift verses which we now possess. By the beginning of 86 he was ready for a more ambitious flight and published the first two books of the Epigrams, mostly composed of poems referring to the reigns of Vespasian and Titus. After this date he must have been in fairly easy circumstances, for he was raised to equestrian rank, acquired a house on the Quirinal, and a small estate at Nomentum, had many rich friends, and always remained a bachelor. But old habit was strong and he is never tired of enlarging on his poverty and the discomforts of life at Rome. On one occasion, at least, he retired for a time to Forum Corneli in Gaul, and there published the third book of the Epigrams in A.D. 87. He soon, however, returned to the capital again and brought out Books IV, V and VI, in the next three successive years. Book VII announces the coming return of Domitian from his Sarmatian campaigns, and must therefore have appeared about the

end of 92, while the next three books came out at yearly intervals. The death of Domitian decided Martial to leave Rome for good, and after sending the Emperor Nerva a selection from Books X and XI he finally returned to Bilbilis in 98. A Spanish lady, Marcella, gave him an estate, and there he ended his days, his last volume, Book XII, being mostly written in Spain, and published late in A.D. 101. The date of his death can be approximately fixed by a letter of Pliny the younger, written 104, which is so characteristic of that very superior person that it is worth quoting in full:

"I was very grieved," Pliny writes to his friend, Cornelius Priscus, "to hear of Martial's death. He was a talented fellow, of shrewd and vigorous understanding, his writings well seasoned with wit and sarcasm, and yet good-humoured withal. I did him the compliment of providing his travelling money when he left Rome: that I owed both to our friendship and to some trifles of verse which he wrote about me. It was an ancient custom to honour and reward those writers who sang the praises of individuals or states; but in our times this, like many other excellent habits, has gone completely out of use. Since we have ceased to do praiseworthy deeds, we think that praise itself is silly. You ask what are the verses for which I thus repaid him. I would refer you to his book, but as a matter of fact I remember some of them: if you like these, you may look up the others later. He is addressing his Muse and tells her to seek my house on the Esquiline, and to knock respectfully.

'But do not with strong liquor flown
Knock at a time that's not your own.
His days to study he must give
Composing speeches, that shall live
With Tully's best, to please the ears
And win a verdict from the Peers.
More safe 'twill be to go a-calling
If lamps are lit and night is falling.
That is your hour, when reigns the rose,
When brows are wet, and Bacchus flows;
For when the Wine God wildly rages
Stern Catos well may read my pages.'

"As he wrote thus about me was I not right then to speed him on his way, and am I not right now to mourn for a true friend's death? He gave me what he could; he would have given more if he had been able. And yet

what greater gift can a man receive than glory and praise and eternity of fame? You may say that Martial's verses will not gain eternity: perhaps they will not; but he wrote them with the supposition that they would."

II

THE EPIGRAMS

The chief value of Martial's Epigrams, disregarding for the moment their literary excellence, lies in the picture they give us of Roman society towards the end of the first century A.D., that period in the world's history which, beyond all others, bears the closest resemblance to our own times. It is a picture drawn by a realist, and in its mingling of light and shade far more convincing than the lurid colours and unrelieved blackness with which Juvenal and Tacitus present us. Martial is a Sancho Panza who sees things as they are: the satirist and the historian have more likeness to the mad knight, and fired by their righteous indignation tilt as blindly against the established order of the Empire as Don Quixote did against his giant windmills. Their moral earnestness is certainly impressive, and as characters they are doubtless more deserving of our esteem than is the easy-going and pleasure-loving epigrammatist; but if we wish to gain a true idea of Rome and Roman life, about the year A.D. 90, it is to the pages of Martial, rather than to Juvenal or Tacitus, that we should turn. Martial has three great advantages over the other two writers: he is good-tempered, while they are soured and disappointed men: he is a Spaniard, to whom the Empire has brought nothing but benefits, while they are Romans who can never forget the time when the world was ruled in the interests of Rome: he is one of the middle class, the great discovery of the new system, while they belong to the official hierarchy which had for centuries enjoyed the doubtful privilege of government.

And so, writing from the outside without temper and without bias, Martial is able to give us a complete panorama of Roman society from top to bottom. At the very summit comes His Most Gracious Majesty, the Emperor Domitian, '*dominus et deus*', as he insisted on being called by the reluctant senate, whose shadowy

powers he refused to recognize. 'His most gracious majesty'—the words make an appropriate inscription for the portrait of Domitian that Martial gives us We see, not at all a cruel and detestable tyrant, 'calvus Nero', but rather a patriotic, popular, and—strangely enough—a rather Puritanical prince, whose benevolent activities at Rome run on much the same lines as those followed to-day by the London County Council. He curbs the enterprise of the pushing tradesmen who encroach upon the highway with their stalls; he settles scales of fees, and regulates theatre accommodation; he offers handsome prizes at the literary and musical competitions which take place in his Alban villa; he employs a young and deserving architect to build for him a palace which shall be worthy of the world's capital city; he keeps a strict watch over the morals of the community, passes laws to protect young children from vicious degradation, endeavours to preserve the sanctity of marriage and family life, and discourages all licentiousness in literature, being himself so strict in his regard for propriety that our poet has to be far more careful than is his wont when he is writing for the imperial ear. These are some of the impressions of Domitian's character that we get from a perusal of the Epigrams, and although Martial is commonly accused of shameless flattery and sycophantic adulation, it is well, for the sake of truth, that we have in him some corrective to the venom of Tacitus' pen. Domitian had his faults, but for the historian his unforgivable sin was that, being himself something of a realist, he refused to acquiesce any longer in the legal fiction that made the senate ostensibly a co-partner in empire.

Immediately below the Emperor comes the imperial entourage: Crispinus, the commander of the body-guard; Regulus, the great orator, Domitian's most trusted counsellor; the freedmen, Parthenius, imperial chamberlain, Sextus, librarian, and Entellus, confidential secretary; the architect Rabirius, the butler Euphemus, the cup-bearer Earinos, and the actors Paris and Latinus. On all of these, high and low alike, Martial lavishes his most ingenious flattery, receiving in return such small rewards as the gift of a toga from Parthenius, described with a wealth of hyperbole in Book VIII, xxviii.

Next we have the leading lights of Roman society,

political and literary, with nearly all of whom in their capacity of patrons Martial seems to have been acquainted, the word '*friend*' in their connection usually rhyming with "*send*—me a present" or "*lend*—me some money". Among the high officials, generals, administrators, and governors of provinces are Licinius Sura, Domitius Tullus, and his brother Lucanus, the Etrusci father and son, Macer, Avitus, Paulus, Vestinus, and Antonius Primus, the most brilliant commander of the Flavian armies, whose capture of Cremona is described in Tacitus' *Histories*. The literary aristocrats include the younger Pliny, Silius Italicus, author of the *Punica*, the poet Stella and his wife Ianthis, the poetess Sulpicia and her husband Calenus, Frontinus the great authority on aqueducts, and Polla, widow of Lucan. Of contemporary writers Quintilian and Juvenal receive complimentary verses; Statius alone is never mentioned.

Then follows a less distinguished gathering, men and women of Martial's own station in life, for whom he shows in many poems a very real and sincere affection. His dearest friend perhaps is his namesake, Julius Martialis, on whose suburban villa he writes one of his most charming pieces; but he has many other intimates, Quintus Ovidius, his neighbour at Nomentum, the centurion Pudens and his British wife Claudia, Canius Rufus of Gades, husband of the learned Theophila, his fellow poets, Castricus and Cerialis, Faustinus and Flaccus, his compatriots Decianus, Priscus, Licinianus, and Maternus. To all of these he writes with genuine warmth, and for many of them he obviously felt the same tender regard as inspires the three beautiful epigrams on the death of the little slave girl Erotion (V, xxxiv, xxxvii, X, lxi), poems which show that even if Martial was a bachelor and no great respecter of women, he was a true lover of children.

And then we are introduced to the more sordid side of life in the capital, to an anonymous world for whom Martial invents fictitious names—Zoilus, Caecilianus, Postumus, Galla, Lesbia, Gellia—a world consisting chiefly of needy clients and upstart parvenus, of old ladies of excessive temperament and young ladies of easy virtue. There is the *captator*, the adventurer who tries by flattery and small services to win the good graces of a childless millionaire, and to secure a legacy in his will: the *delator*, a pernicious rascal who makes a trade

of spying on his neighbours and accusing them of some offence against the imperial regime: the *recitator*, less dangerous than the informer but even more annoying, the amateur poet who insists on boring his friends with recitals of his verses. Every aspect of Rome Martial presents to us. With him we pass through the crowded streets and the long muddy stairways up the hill-sides, along which the white-robed client in the early morning has to trudge his way in order to be present at his patron's levée. We see the law courts beset by a crowd of litigants and hear the applause and cheers that greet some brilliant effort of eloquence by a great advocate. We visit the baths, public and private, each with its own regular clientèle, and watch the masseurs anointing and rubbing down their customers, while sly thieves look for their opportunity to filch some bather's gown. We sit among the audience in the theatre and smile as Leitus or Oceanus, the two chief ushers, touch some upstart on the shoulder and eject him from the rows of seats reserved for senators and knights. We smell the odour of the circus mingled of the blood of slain animals, the scent of liquid saffron and cinnamon, and the press of the great crowd. And finally we hear all the gossip of the town: the shameful behaviour of the priests of Cybele, the unfortunate accident that befell an Etruscan at the sacrifice, how one boy was killed by a falling icicle, another by a snake lurking within a hollow statue, how a tame lion mauled the circus attendants, how a hare escaped unharmed from the arena; and so on and so on. There is hardly any incident however trivial which will not serve Martial as the subject for an epigram, and he always treats his theme with the lightest wit and the most dexterous skill. He is a realist, and one of the most extreme of that school: he shrinks from nothing, dull, coarse, and disgusting though it be; and consequently many of his pieces are extremely offensive to a delicate reader. But the blame for them, if blame must be allotted—in this volume they are mostly left in their original Latin—does not rest solely with Martial: part must be assigned to the realistic method, part to the Roman character, and part to life itself.

III

MARTIAL AS POET

In the history of the Epigram Martial is indisputably the greatest name. As regards bulk of poems, variety of subject, general interest, and posthumous fame, he easily surpasses all his Greek rivals, while among his own countrymen there is no one who in this particular field can be even compared with him. He is certainly indebted in some degree—and handsomely acknowledges his debt—to Catullus and Ovid for his style ; but if it is possible to improve upon the dainty lightness of the one and the glittering polish of the other, Martial accomplishes that miraculous feat. He is *the* epigrammatist, and it is largely owing to his predominance that the word ' epigram ' in English bears a somewhat different meaning from that which it has in Greek. Originally an inscription, whether in verse or in prose, such as might be placed on a tomb, a statue, or a temple offering, it came to mean for the Greeks a short poem having, as Mr Mackail says, " the compression and conciseness of a real inscription, highly finished, evenly balanced, simple, lucid." To this definition most of the pieces in the Greek Anthology answer, but to the wit and point which form the chief essentials of a modern epigram they make little pretension. It is of Martial that the Oxford Dictionary is thinking when it says : " An epigram is a short poem ending in a witty and ingenious turn of thought to which the rest of the composition is intended to lead up."

Martial's reputation as satirist and wit has indeed rather obscured his more definitely poetical qualities In the Epigrams he confines himself practically to three metres, the elegiac couplet, the hendecasyllabic, and the iambic scazon ; and it is interesting to notice the connection that obviously exists between the choice of metre and the writer's thoughts. Though Martial lived most of his days in Rome, he was in a very genuine sense a lover of the country, of the simple life, and of his own native land. When he is treating of these three subjects and writing rather to please himself than his Roman audience, he is apt to escape from the confined limits of the epigram, and to employ the ' limping iambic ' as his metre. The bizarre effect obtained by the unexpected

spondee at the end of each line probably seemed to him exactly suitable; for in those days of strained rhetoric and formal antithesis it was an unusual novelty to have simple ideas and to express them in simple language. His model, of course, is the 'Sirmio' of Catullus, and in several pieces he, at least, equals his predecessor. There is the beautiful description (III, lviii) of Faustinus' farm, and of the suburban retreat of Julius Martialis (IV, lxiv), the outburst on the glories of Spain (IV, lv), and the ecstatic picture of the seaside at Formiae (X, xxx); best known of all perhaps the poem on the death of little Erotion (V, xxxvii), with whom compared, 'inamabilis sciurus et frequens phoenix.' These poems indeed are studded with gems of phrasing—'grandes proborum virgines colonorum', 'sub urbe possides, famem mundam', 'caelo perfruitur sereniore', 'viva sed quies ponti',—and they show that Martial had latent in him a vein of imagination not unlike that which Goldsmith worked when he wrote '*The Deserted Village*'.

While the best and longest of the iambic pieces treat of the picturesque, the most striking of the hendecasyllabics are concerned with personal emotions. Here again Martial follows Catullus in the 'Passer' poems, but for him the place of Lesbia is taken by male friends, above all by his dear Julius Martialis. To him the three most charming of the series are addressed, the invitation to holiday, with its reminder of the hours—'qui nobis pereunt et imputantur' (V, xx); the description of the happy life and all that it needs (X, xlvii); and the final poem of farewell written in sorrow from Spain—'nulli te facias nimis sodalem'.

It would be possible to collect from Martial a small anthology, in which each piece was of high poetical quality, and most of these pieces would be either in iambics or in hendecasyllabics. But this was not the sort of thing that really pleased Martial's public; what they wanted was humorous realism, and if the humour was somewhat gross, that was rather a recommendation than a fault. Consequently the large majority of the Epigrams are of the humorous type, and are written in the elegiac metre. Pieces more than twelve lines in length are comparatively rare, and a very large number are either in four lines or in two. Generally speaking, the shorter the epigram is, the stronger is the effect that it produces, and the device whereby the sting of the sarcasm is kept for the very last word is often used with wonderful effect.

Many of the two-line pieces in particular reach perfection within their limited sphere, and defy translation. To take one simple example, no better and no worse than a score of similar cases—(Bk. I, xxviii) :

> hesterno fetere mero qui credit Acerram
> fallitur : in lucem semper Acerra bibit.

> " If you think it is yesterday's wine smells so strong
> On Acerra, you're wrong.
> Acerra this morning was still drinking deep,
> While you were asleep."

An English translation may give the sense, but owing to the character of our language it cannot reproduce the finer points of sound and position of words on which Martial depends for his effect. In his epigram the vital points are the position of *hesterno* and *fallitur*, and the sound of the syllable—*er*—six times repeated in the two lines ; and these must almost inevitably disappear. Still the joke remains, and although slight, it is a good one, as chance once proved to me many years ago when I was a master at a certain public school on the south coast. I had been spending the night at the club and was returning home about 3 A.M. one bright summer morning, when, to my joy, I met my colleague, the Reverend Mr X., who was in the habit of rising with the sun to enjoy a walk over the downs. To ask him to take my form to-morrow and to be assured of his willingness was the work of a moment, and I went on to sleep the sleep of the just. About half-past nine, however, my landlady ushered the school porter into my bedroom—" There's no one with your lads, sir, and they're making a bit of a noise ". Jumping up in haste I ran across and reproached my friend with his breach of trust. " My dear boy ", said he, " you asked me to take them *to-morrow* ". I was forced to apologize, and since then I have always regarded this epigram with especial respect.

F. A. W.

THE EPIGRAMS OF MARTIAL

BOOK ONE

BOOK ONE

PREFACE

I hope that in these little books of mine I have observed such due proportion that no man who is conscious of his own rectitude can complain about them, seeing that their sportive mood preserves, even towards the meanest individuals, that decent respect in which the authors of old were so lacking that they not only made wrongful use of real names, but even did this in the case of the great. For myself I would seek reputation at a lower price than that, and the last thing for which I desire to be commended is mere smartness.

May the malicious commentator abstain from meddling with the plain meaning of my jokes, and from writing my epigrams anew; for he is dishonourable who misapplies ingenuity upon another's book. I would make no apology for immodest unreserve in word—that is, for the language of epigram—were I the first to use it, but this is the manner in which Catullus writes, and Marsus, Pedo, Gaetulicus, and every other author whose works are read all through; yet if there be any man so ostentatiously prim, that one may not, even on a single page, speak plain Latin to him, he can be content to go no further than this preface—or rather no further than the title. Epigrams are written for those who are used to look on at the games of Flora; therefore let no Cato come into our playhouse; or if he come let him watch the show—and methinks I shall be within my rights if I close this preface with some verse—

* *When you knew that the games of gay Flora were on*
You might from the theatre refrain:
Or did you, stern Cato, come in with a frown
Just to make a grim exit again?

I

* *PREFACE*

See, at your service, if you list,
Martial the epigrammatist ;
To whom, kind reader, here below,
While he the joys of fame could know,
Such meed of glory you have given
As poets seldom reap in heaven.

II

THE BOOK SPEAKS

If you would choose a book to be
  Your travelling comrade, I remind you
To buy a handy one like me,
  And leave your heavy tomes behind you.

One that a single hand can hold
  Is best of all, and 'twere a pity
Should you forget where such are sold
  And wander vaguely through the city.

Near Pallas' forum you shall see
  The shrine of Peace, and close behind them
Secundus' shop—a freedman he
  Of Lucca's sage—there you shall find them.

III

THE AUTHOR TO HIS BOOK

Poor little book, but you're safer here ;
  Why seek Booksellers' Row—and Fame ?
  Mistress Rome is a blasée dame,
All her children will gibe and jeer :
Even her babies can sniff and sneer,
  Young and old, they are all the same,
Poor little book, but you're safer here,
  Why seek Booksellers' Row—and Fame ?
They whose applause may seem sincere
  Soon will toss you aside to shame.
Think you my pen is too austere ?
  Go then fly ere it harm and maim,
Poor little book—but you're safer here.

IV

TO DOMITIAN

CAESAR, if thou shouldst read what I have writ,
Wear not the frown a world doth quake to see ;
Even in triumphs may the soldiers' wit
Flow unreproved, aye tho' they jest at thee ;
But let the smile thou grantest Thymelê,
Or gay Latinus, deck thy brow serene ;
From censure may my harmless mirth be free,
My page is wanton but my life is clean.

V

THE EMPEROR'S REPLY

I SHOWED a pageant of the sea
And in return you send to me
Your wretched lines, you mocker ;
Perhaps for this reward you look,
That I should send both bard and book
To Davy Jones' locker.

VI

THE HARE AND THE LIONS

SAFELY the Eagle bore young Ganymede
In careful talons through the empty air ;
So now the lions hear their Quarry plead,
Safe in their mighty jaws doth sport the hare !
A God of power supreme each marvel wrought—
Is Jove's or Caesar's greater in thy thought ?

VII

THE RIVALS

ALTHOUGH Verona hears, I dare to say
That Stella's lovely cushat soars above
The pretty sparrow of Catullus' love.
Aye, lesser is thy singer's vaunted lay
As is the sparrow lesser than the dove.

VIII

TO DECIANUS

In that you follow Cato's perfect way
And Thrasea's law, but choose to live your day,
Nor seek a naked blade your cares to end,
You live as I would have you live, my friend ;
Fame cheaply won doth mere self-slaughter give,
I choose for praise the worth that dares to live.

IX

TO COTTA

You long to be a pretty spark and win a hero's fame,
But 'pretty spark' and 'petty fop' are mostly much the same.

X

LOVE'S CHARM

Maronilla, Gemellus doth adore thee,
With instant prayers and vows doth oft implore thee,
And many a lover's gift he lays before thee ;
Since neither beauty, grace, nor charm attend thee
What makes him seek thee so, and thus commend thee ?
A churchyard cough that promises to end thee.

XI

TO SEXTILIANUS

As a knight they allow you ten shillings a day,
But your wine bill alone is just double your pay,
So the servants would have a hard service, I think,
If they served you hot water to mix with your drink,
For to bring you enough's an impossible feat—
But you save them the trouble by taking it neat.

XII

TO REGULUS

Near to Alcides' town, cool Tivoli,
White Albula doth spread her misty mere,
And close, at the fourth milestone, thou shalt see
An holy grove and fields to Muses dear ;
A farm with rugged porch for shade was here
That nigh had wrought a dreadful deed—ah me
So suddenly it fell !—And thou wert near,
Scarce from beneath thy steeds had carried thee !
I wot that even Fortune shrank aghast
From crime so foul, lest hate should be her meed.
Now is that ruin gain : for perils past
Are things of price to all that give them heed,
Dear Regulus, for had thy roof stood fast,
It had not proved that there are Gods indeed.

* XIII

ARRIA AND PAETUS

When Arria, that model wife,
Drew from her breast the blood-stained knife—
' This does not hurt, dear lord,' she said,
' 'Tis of your hurt I am afraid.'

* XIV

THE HARE AND THE LIONS

The other day we witnessed, Sire, a very funny thing,
When lions wantoned merrily and sported in the ring,
The while a hare leaped gaily forth from out their open jaws
And gambolled with the fearsome beasts amid our loud applause.
We wondered how the captured prey escaped the lions wild
Till we were told that they were yours—and so of course were mild.

XV

TO HIS FRIEND

Ah Julius mine, I count no friend more dear,
So faithful love and friendship have we known ;
And now your sixtieth consulate is near,
How few the days that you can call your own ;
Defer not joy, but claim the past alone ;

Trust not a fortune that may ne'er appear,
  Too oft we find that wingèd joys are flown ;
But care and linkèd toils are ever here.
Nay, with both hands, we needs must grasp delight
  And hold her to our heart while yet we may :
Yet even thus she oft doth mock our might
  And from the fond embrace doth glide away.
True wisdom saith not ' Life shall soon be bright ' ;
  To-morrow is too late—Live thou to-day.

XVI

OLLA PODRIDA

Good work you'll find, some poor, and much that's worse,
It takes all sorts to make a book of verse.

XVII

DECLINED WITH THANKS

You say, ' There's need of men to plead ' ;
  You bid me don the gown ;
There's need, I vow, of men to plough—
  But must I turn a clown ?

* XVIII

TO TUCCA

Why with this new cheap Vatican your old Falernian
  smother ?
What wrong has the good liquor done, what benefit the other ?
Your guests perhaps deserve to die : for them I do not care.
But 'tis a shame that all must blame to slay a vintage rare.

XIX

THE LAST STRAW

Four teeth, I think, were left to you
  Until, my ancient dame,
A fit of coughing shot out two,
  A second did the same.

And now the third to come shall find
There's nothing in the way,
So, Aelia, calm your anxious mind
And cough the livelong day.

XX

TO CAECILIANUS

What crazy trick is this you do ?
Your guests look on amazed and rueful :
You bade them come to dine with you,
And now you gobble every truffle !
What sort of dainty ought to fill
That monstrous maw, you greedy sinner ?
You'd eat if I could have my will
The truffles served for Claudius' dinner.

XXI

MUCIUS AND PORSENA

The hand that sought a King but slew a slave
Was thrust to perish in the altar flame,
And Porsena his hardy foe forgave
And bade him go, touched by a generous shame.
While Mucius endured his hand to maim
The monarch dared not to behold the deed ;
And thus that hand has earned the greater fame,
A truer blow had won a lesser meed.

XXII

THE HARE AND THE LIONS

Fear not the lion, little hare,
Those dreadful fangs thou needst not flee,
For these have never learned to tear
A puny little beast like thee ;
On mightier foes he spends his rage,
From weakling necks doth he refrain,
And shall thy blood his thirst assuage ?
That petty draught would he disdain.

As thou, for hounds a fitting prey,
His hunger canst not satisfy,
So Caesar's might doth turn away
And pass the Dacian stripling by.

* XXIII

BOON COMPANIONS

If you would feast at Cotta's board,
The baths your only chance afford
To get an invitation.
I never yet with him have dined.
My naked charms do not, I find,
Excite his admiration.

XXIV

TO DECIANUS

To look on yonder fellow's brow austere
And shaggy locks might fill the soul with fear,
But hear him speak and you would surely say,
'The Curius or Camillus of to-day.'
Trust not to looks, they are a treacherous guide ;
But yesterday one took him for a bride !

XXV

TO FAUSTINUS

Publish your works—too long have you forborne—
Let not your polished work in darkness lie ;
'Tis such as Cecrops' city should not scorn,
Nor Rome's ripe scholars pass in silence by.
Nay, doth it irk you that reward is nigh ?
Why bar out fame who standeth at the gate ?
Give birth to what must live, before you die,
For honour paid to ashes comes too late.

XXVI

TO SEXTILIANUS

All the seats to knights allotted
Cannot vie with you, I think ;
At this rate you'd be besotted
E'en if water were your drink.

You're a beggar most persistent,
For you cadge from all at hand
And you send to seats far distant
Your importunate demand ;
Yet the liquor that you favour
In Abruzzi never grew,
And no Tuscan hill could flavour
Clusters sweet enough for you ;
Nay, you quaff a vintage classic
That Opimius knew of yore,
And the blackened cask of Massic
Yields for you its ripened store.
Ten full cups I don't deny you,
But if more you wish to drain,
Then a pot-house should supply you
With the dregs of Laletane.

XXVII

'TIS WISE TO FORGET'

I MAY have asked you here to dine,
But that was late at night,
And none of us had spared the wine
If I remember right.
You thought the invitation meant,
Though wine obscured my wit !
And—O most parlous precedent—
You made a note of it !
The maxim that in Greece was true
Is true in Rome to-day—
' I hate a fellow-toper who
Remembers what I say.'

XXVIII

ON ACERRA

HE reeks, you might think, of his yesterday's drink ;
But knowing his customs and ways,
You are wrong, I'll be sworn, for he drank till the morn,
So the savour is truly to-day's.

XXIX

TO FIDENTINUS

A RUMOUR says that you recite
As *yours* the verses that *I* write.
Friend, if you'll credit them to me
I'll send you all my poems free ;
But if as yours you'd have them known,
Buy them, and they'll become your own.

XXX

TO DIAULUS

A SURGEON once, you now begin
As undertaker's man,
To earn a bedside practice in
The only way you can.

XXXI

THE VOW

ENCOLPUS, the centurion's favoured slave,
Shall lay his locks, great Phoebus, at thy shrine ;
When Pudens hath the guerdon of the brave
In place and power, that offering shall be thine.
Ere down shall mar his cheek, claim thy reward,
While flowing curls the milk-white neck adorn ;
Long may thy boons endure to slave and lord ;
Let manhood wait, but let him soon be shorn.

* XXXII [1]

ON SABIDIUS

I DO not love you, Dr Fell.
The reason why I cannot tell.
But this at least I know full well.
I do not love you, Dr Fell.

[1] With due acknowledgments.

XXXIII

ON GELLIA

She weeps not for her sire if none be near,
In company she calls up many a tear.
True mourners would not have their sorrows known,
For grief of heart will choose to weep alone.

XXXIV

TO LESBIA

You never guard or close the doors
To hide your pranks from observation,
And for those stolen joys of yours
Your confidant is all the nation.
Nay, those who see your wantonness
Delight you more than those who share it,
No pleasure pleases you unless
To all the world you can declare it.
From brazen ways pray, Lesbia, turn
And let the demi-mondaines teach you,
From Chionë or Ias learn
A show of virtue, I beseech you.
You think my censure harsh? Not so,
For if you follow my direction
I would not ask you to forgo
Your lovers, but to shun detection.

XXXV

TO CORNELIUS

You say my verses are not fit—
So loose and frivolous their wit—
For pedagogues to read in school;
Cornelius, you forget the rule
That little verses such as these,
Like wives and husbands, cannot please
If they are prudish. Would you say
'Write me a wedding-song, but pray
Be grave as in a funeral dirge'?
At Flora's feast would any urge

That every light o' love should be
Veiled with a matron's modesty ?
These merry songs, to win success,
Need just a touch of wantonness ;
A dullard would Priapus be
If made a priest of Cybele.

XXXVI

THE BROTHERS

Lucanus, Tullus, if the Gods had given
To you the fate of Castor and his brother,
In loving emulation each had striven
To give his life in ransom for the other,
And he the first to seek dark Proserpine
Had said, ' My brother, live thy days and mine.'

* XXXVII

TO BASSUS

Your chamber ware is made of gold,
Your drinking-cup of glass is ;
'Tis plain that you more precious hold
The food that through you passes.

XXXVIII

TO FIDENTINUS

The verse is mine but friend, when you declaim it,
It seems like yours, so grievously you maim it.

XXXIX

TO DECIANUS

How few the friends like those in years of yore,
That honest age, but if one such there be
In Hellene culture steeped and Roman lore
Ennobled by a true simplicity,
A soul that Right and Honour hold in fee,
Whose inmost thoughts and vows are void of shame,
Whose giant mind upholds and makes him free,
My life on this—that Decian is his name.

* XL

THE POET'S CURSE

MAY those who frown as they peruse this book,
On all with envy, no one on them, look.

XLI

THE WIT

CAECILIUS, you think your taste is pretty ;
Believe me, any kennel in the city
Could furnish rascals just as wise and witty.

Yours is the kind that every gutter hatches,
Across the Tiber it is bred in batches
And trades in broken glass and peddles matches.

If you would find your peers, the street supplies them,
The sellers of boiled peas, the lout that buys them,
The cheating quacks with snakes to advertize them.

The salt meat vendor's hireling is your fellow,
To yours the street-musician's tones are mellow,
The reeking sausage-seller thus does bellow.

Slave-dealing Spaniards, refuse of the nation,
The debauchee whose drivelling iteration
Is proof of babbling age and dissipation.

These are your equals. It does not beseem you
To count yourself what no one else will deem you,
No Tettius Caballus we esteem you.

Let not the meaning of his name misguide you.
The taste and wit that nature has denied you
No vulgar dullard's horse-play can provide you.

XLII

THE LOVING WIFE

WHEN Porcia heard how Brutus fell
And strove to join her lord,
'Twas vain, for they who loved her well
Withheld from her the sword.

'Your witless care,' she cried, 'hath sought
My purpose to deny;
I deemed my father's deed had taught
That all who will may die,
Though troublous knaves their wish withstand
And every weapon hide.'
Deep in her throat a flaming brand
She thrust forthwith and died.

XLIII

TO MANCINUS

You bade us dine with you, three score
Invited guests, and nothing more
You gave us than a wretched boar—
Aye, that was all I vow.

No Autumn grapes of flavour rare,
No apple honey-sweet was there,
Nor any ripe and luscious pear,
Hung late upon the bough.

No rosy peaches graced the board,
Your baskets still their cheeses hoard,
No olive jar its bounty poured
To cheer our drooping mind.

In lonely state that pigling lay,
So small that 'twere an easy prey
For any brat unarmed to slay;
Yet there was worse behind!

We never got a single bit,
But only sat and looked at it,
So in the Arena one might sit,
And feast his eyes while starving.

You stingy host, for such a feat
I will not wish you boar to eat,
But only hope, when next you meet,
The boar may do the carving.

XLIV

THE OLD THEME

'Hares and Lions again,' so I hear you complain;
If they seem but monotonous fare
And for vengeance you pine, you can ask me to dine
And give me two courses of hare.

XLV

POET'S PADDING

LEST all overlook so tiny a book
And brevity lead to its loss,
I will not refuse such padding to use
As 'Τον δ'ἀπαμειβόμενος.'

* XLVI

FESTINA LENTE

WHEN you say—'Quick: let's get it over'—
I feel myself a languid lover.
It's only when you bid me wait
That I dash from the starting-gate.
If you are in such haste to go
You'd better tell me to be slow.

XLVII

TO DIAULUS

Now leechcraft forsaking you try undertaking
And furnish the funerals of men,
So your trade is the same tho' you alter the name—
For you always provided them then.

* XLVIII

THE HARE AND THE LIONS

THE bull was not spared by that wide-open maw;
But the hare gambols lightly and frisks in his jaw,
Running now all the swifter, escaped from the foe,
And something of leonine courage doth show.
She was never more safe in the loneliest fen,
Never more sure of life in the depths of her den.
If you wish, wanton hare, from the greyhound to fly,
Then the jaws of the lion will refuge supply.

XLIX

TO LICINIANUS

The Celtiberian tribesmen tell thy praise
And proudly doth our Spain thy fame record,
How glad thy lot on Bilbilis to gaze,
The city famed alike for steed and sword.

Caius the ancient with his locks of snow,
The shattered crags of Vadavevo's peak,
And soft Boterdus' valley shalt thou know,
Whose pleasant groves Pomona loves to seek.

How sweet in genial Congedus to swim,
Or breast the waters of the nymphs' calm pool,
In Salo's brook to brace each weary limb
Where steel is hardened by his waters cool.

Voberca's self—no further need'st thou stray—
Shall bring thee game, and thou shalt hunt at ease,
And cloudless summer's heat canst thou allay
By golden Tagus' bank beneath the trees.

Dercenna shall thy parching thirst assuage,
And Nutha colder than the frozen snow,
But ere the wrath of hoarse December rage
Seek the calm shores of sunny Tarraco.

Thy Laletania shall thy refuge be,
And there shalt thou the boar or hind ensnare,
The while thy verdurer tracks the stag for thee,
Thy sturdy steed may tire the cunning hare.

There unkempt urchins seek the genial glow
Thy forest-girdled hearthstone doth afford,
Where rustic guests a generous welcome know
And many a hungry hunter shares thy board.

The sandal, crescent-decked, the robe of state,
The cloak of purple dye thou shalt not need,
Nor fear the hoarse Liburnian at thy gate ;
No clients grumble there, no widows plead ;

No pale defendant breaks into thy sleep ;
Nay, if thou wilt, turn mornings into nights :
The world's applause let others seek and keep,
Yet feel some pity for those hapless wights.

And while friend Sura goes in quest of praise,
Seek true delight henceforth and pride forswear,
Justly the joys of life demand our days,
For fame already hath her ample share.

L

TARATALLA

SINCE Homer says, ' they sliced the other meat,
You call your scullion ' Slice '—a gay conceit ;
And may not I adopt a like device ?
For ' T'other ' as a name is just as nice.

LI

THE HARE AND THE LIONS

WHY flee the lion in vainglorious flight ?
The sturdiest foe alone provokes his might,
And will he turn from lordly bulls to thee ;
Or stoop to crush a neck he scarce can see ?
Ah, puny hare, that hope must thou forgo,
Thou shalt not fall to such a noble foe.

LII

FALSE CLAIMS

To you will I commend my book ;
That is if Fidentinus brook
My claim to keep an owner's rights ;
He always steals what he recites.
Should he oppress it or enslave,
Defend it and convict the knave ;
And if he claim its lord to be,
Say it was mine but now is free.
Three times and four the truth proclaim
And put the kidnapper to shame.

LIII

TO FIDENTINUS

YOU stole my book—one page and one alone
Is yours, indelibly 'tis signed and sealed
With vilest imperfections all your own :
Thus of the rest your theft doth stand revealed.

So when the courtly gallants of the Town
  Are elbowed by a bumpkin smeared and patched,
Their cloaks are sullied by the greasy clown ;
  Is vulgar clay with clearest crystal matched ?
When to swan-haunted streams a crow is nigh
  The carrion bird hath yet a fouler taint,
When thrills the grove to nightingales, the pie
  Mars with her evil shriek the Attic plaint.
No surer proof, no advocate, I need
Your page stands forth to prove your felon deed.

LIV

TO FUSCUS

Your friends abound on every side,
But is your heart all occupied ?
For if one vacant place there be
I pray you give that place to me.
A love untried may yet be true,
For all old friends have once been new.
Make proof of mine, since, if 'tis fit,
The years can only strengthen it.

* LV

COUNTRY PLEASURES

Dear Fronto, famed alike in peace and war,
If you would learn what my chief wishes are,
Know that I crave some acres few to till,
And live at ease as careless as I will.
Why should I always trudge the stony street
And go each morn some haughty lord to greet,
When all the country's spoils are mine to get
Caught in the meshes of a hunting-net ?
When I with line could snare the leaping trout
And from the hive press golden honey out,
While Joan my humble board with eggs supplies
Boiled on a fire whose logs she never buys ?
May he not love this life who loves not me,
And still in Rome a pale-faced client be !

LVI

THE SEASON'S CRIME

The rain doth vex the vineyard still
And drips from every vine.
Vintner, whatever be your will,
You cannot sell neat wine.

LVII

MODERATION

You bid me say what kind of maid
Can draw me or repel?
My friend, I hate a forward jade
But loathe a prude as well.
I love the mean: extremes are vain
And never bring me joy;
Love long denied is grief and pain,
While easy favours cloy.

* LVIII

THE CONNOISSEUR

'Eight hundred down'—the dealer said:
I smiled—'No, not to-day.'
But Phoebus straight the money paid
And took the lad away.

'You should not be so mean,'—you cry.
'If Phoebus, why not you?'
I am not built like him; or I
Might be as generous too.

LIX

TO FLACCUS

The most luxurious baths on earth,
Rich marbles to recline on,
And then a wretched florin's worth
Is all I got to dine on!
Ah, give me Lupus' dingy den;
'Tis little consolation
To bathe in luxury—and then
To perish of starvation.

* LX

THE HARE AND THE LIONS

THOUGH you may pass, Miss Hare, within his jaw,
The lion thinks no flesh is in his maw.
Where is your back, and where those shoulders round,
Wherein the bullock feels the deep-struck wound?
Why tease in empty sport the forest lord?
He picks the beast that shall his meal afford.

LXI

THE CATALOGUE OF POETS

WELL doth Verona love her poet-seer,
To Virgil's sacred name doth Mantua thrill,
And though she deems Stella and Livy dear
Apona holds her Flaccus dearer still.
To Nile that waters Egypt's rainless coast
Apollodorus hath his lustre lent.
Two Senecas are proud Cordova's boast
With Lucan peerless and pre-eminent.
Cadiz the gay delights in Canius' name
Augusta doth with Decian's glory shine;
So too our Bilbilis shall tell your fame
One day, my friend, and haply whisper mine.

LXII

A CHANGE OF CLIMATE

LAEVINA was a stricter prude
Than Sabine dames of old,
And e'en her husband's rigorous mood
Was not a whit more cold.

Alas, to bathe she loved to go
And thus was she undone,
For Tunbridge Wells enhanced the woe
That Cheltenham had begun.

'Twas there she felt the amorous flame,
And fled with gallant gay:
So 'twas Penelope that came,
But Helen went away.

LXIII

TO CELER

You'd have me read my verse. Nay that ensures
The consequence that you would make them yours.

LXIV

THE BOASTER

You're rich and young, as all confess,
And none denies your loveliness ;
But when we hear your boastful tongue
You're neither pretty, rich, nor young.

LXV

THE DOUBLE-ENTENDRE

'Ficus,' I said, but when you heard
You mocked it as a barbarous word
And called my blunder gross.
Your sort and mine, as now I see
Do differ—fundamentally :
So yours shall be, 'Ficos.'

LXVI

THE PLAGIARIST

Insatiable thief, you're wrong to think
That poets can be made at such a price ;
Though paper's cheap and copying and ink,
Believe me eighteen-pence will not suffice.
Seek an unpublished work, verse yet unknown,
Whose virgin page its owner guards within
Close locked and sealed and scanned by him alone,
Unsmeared as yet by any studious chin.
For books once known can hardly be suborned
To change their lord ; find an unpolished scroll
With boss and parchment cover unadorned—
Some such I have and would not tell a soul—
Remember, if for stolen fame you look,
To buy the author's silence, not his book.

LXVII

TO CERYLUS

You often say my work is coarse. 'Tis true
But then it must be so—it deals with you.

LXVIII

THE ONLY GIRL

'Tis Naevia if he smile or weep ;
  There's nothing he can do without her ;
If silent for a while he keep,
  That very silence is about her.

'Tis Naevia still, do what he may
  Drink, eat, gesticulate, or mutter
She only is his ' Yea ' and ' Nay '
  Which, save for her, he could not utter.

When writing to salute his Sire,
  His mind from her he could not sever,
But ended with a lover's fire
  ' My only life, my light for ever.'

With mocking glance did Naevia read
  And slyly smiled above the letter ;
But, foolish Rufus, you've no need
  To rage—the're girls as good and better.

LXIX

A MORTAL PAN

Tarentum worships Canius now,
  Of old she worshipped Pan ;
And thus the merry God doth bow
  Before the merry man.

LXX

GREETINGS

Go, little book, to greet my friend for me,
  Do reverence in Proculus' bright halls ;
And if thou ask the way, I'll tell it thee—
  Pass Castor's shrine and Vesta's ancient walls,
That guard the Virgin Goddess' sacred home ;
  And thence a reverent temple thou shalt see
Fair with the statues of the Lord of Rome.

Near is the vast Colossus decked with rays
Wherewith the Rhodian marvel may not vie ;
Yet hasten on and tarry not to gaze,
And pass the shrine of gay Lyaeus by :
Hard by the fane of Cybele, aglow
With Corybants, in colours all ablaze
Stands the fair house and lofty portico.

Go near thereto,'tis never barred with pride,
But Phoebus and the muse it holdeth dear ;
To these its door is ever opened wide.
But, if 'tis asked why Martial is not here,
Say ' He doth weave thy praises into song
And may not spare an hour to aught beside,
For, had he come, his verse had suffered wrong.'

LXXI

THE TOAST

A SEVEN-FOLD draught to toast Justina pour,
For Laevia six, and five must Lycas claim,
To Ida three are due, to Lyde four,
One draught for every letter of a name ;
That spell should draw them, but, if vain it be,
I drink to sleep—he's sure to come to me.

LXXII

TO FIDENTINUS

Do you design that verse of mine
Should bring repute to you,
Or did you deem by such a scheme
To be a poet too ?

Well, I suppose, the pearly rows
'Twixt Aegle's lips that glow,
Though purchased bone, she calls her own,
And thinks them truly so.

Lycoris, too, of mulberry hue
Believes—delusion fond—
The powder puff is quite enough
To make a lovely blonde.

Must we regard you as a bard ?
Why, then I will admit
Your head has shocks of lovely locks
Without a hair on it.

* LXXIII

TO CAECILIANUS

When you offered your wife to each passer-by free,
Not a soul ever wanted to try her.
You have learnt wisdom now : kept beneath lock and key
She has crowds of men waiting to buy her.

LXXIV

TO PAULA

You had some chance to disavow
What rumour said of him and you
Until you married him : but now
Will any hold the tale untrue ?

LXXV

PRUDENCE

When Linus begged a loan, his friend,
A prudent soul, declined to lend
But gave him half, because he found
That saved ten shillings in the pound.

* LXXVI

THE POET'S WAGES

Dear Flaccus, you the best reward of all my anxious thought,
To manhood grown in that far town that once Antenor sought,
Have done with those Pierian strains the Muses love to sing ;
Of all the band none to your hand a shilling e'er will bring.
What from Apollo will you get ? Let Pallas be your friend,
A maid of sense without pretence, and lots of cash to lend.
What can the Bacchic ivy give ? But the Palladian tree
Still useful grows with bending boughs in grey-green harmony.
On Helicon you naught will find—a lyre perhaps or rose,
Or a bright gleam of babbling stream, and noise of vain 'bravos.'
Why court the nymphs that in Permess or Cirrha have their home ?
Richer by far and nearer are the markets of our Rome.
There you will hear the chink of coin : with poets only misses
Send through the air to our poor chair the sound of empty kisses.

LXXVII

ON CHARINUS

His health is good yet he is always pale ;
He drinks but little, 'tis of no avail,
So wan his face no sun can darken it,
And good digestion aids him not a whit,
Not even rouge that pallid cheek can flush—
And e'en his vices do not make him blush !

LXXVIII

TO FESTUS

Though death had gripped his throat he knew not fear
When the black venom crept into his cheek,
But stayed awhile his sorrowing friends to cheer,
Then tearless turned the nether world to seek ;
Dark poison's numbing draught he put aside
And would not brook slow famine's long delay ;
Stainless he lived and as a Roman died,
And since he dared to tread the nobler way,
More glorious than Cato's was his end
Who chose to die though Caesar was his friend.

LXXIX

TO ATTALUS

Some busy task you still pursue, nor seem to care a jot
Whether there's anything to do or whether there is not.
As business man or counsellor your ardour never cools,
You're busy driving bargains or as busy driving mules.
'Tis unemployment that you dread : that evil circumvent,
My busy friend, by dying ; for that job is permanent.

LXXX

TO CANUS

You begged a meal the day you died ;
You got it as was due ;
And then you perished mortified
Because it wasn't two.

LXXXI

TO SOSIBIANUS

YOUR mother was a slave ; but though you guess it
Why call your father ' Master ' and confess it ?

LXXXII

THE ESCAPE

BEHOLD the crumbled mass that here
  Spreads o'er the ground its vast extent ;
To crime unspeakable 'twas near,
  Yet is the ruin innocent.

Beneath the arch its master lay,
  The ponderous roof-tree overhead,
And thence he scarce was borne away
  Ere fell the mass in ruin dread.

Whilst he was there, each mouldering wall,
  Each straining stone, the weight endured ;
Ah Regulus, it dared not fall
  Until thy safety was assured.

Now as we shrink in fear to see
  How nigh the dreadful peril came,
We know the Gods have care of thee
  And kept the ruin free from blame.

* LXXXIII

TO MANNEIA

YOUR dog licks your mouth and you don't push him from it.
But what says the proverb—' A dog and his vomit ' ?

LXXXIV

ON QUIRINALIS

CHILDREN he wants, but fears the marriage bond ;
Yet his dislikes and fancies correspond ;
For kindly handmaids set the matter right ;
The fields and mansions of the worthy knight
Are well supplied with slavelings—knightlings rather ;
To each of whom he is a proper father.

LXXXV

THE TRUTH REVEALED

Poor Marius! the auctioneer,
Who glibly spoke as he was bidden
To keep his client's credit clear,
Revealed the truth he should have hidden.

'Observe,' said he 'this favoured spot
The land well tilled, the outlook pretty,
In short an eligible lot
Conveniently near the city.

'Pray, gentlemen, do not suppose
The sale is forced—that's not suggested;
The owner not a penny owes,
Nay, he has money well invested.

'Does some one ask what makes him sell?
Mere fancy that it is not healthy;
He's lost slaves, cattle, crops—and well,
You know the whims that move the wealthy.'

I hear that no one cared to buy—
Since none was loser by profession—
And Marius still wonders why
The land remains in his possession.

* LXXXVI

NEAR NEIGHBOURS

You think that I'm a happy man
With Novius so near me,
And when I lift my finger can
Get him at once to cheer me.
The truth is he's as far away
As is my other friend
Who rules Syene's land to-day
Where Nile's blue waters end.
I never meet him at a meal,
Nor find his door ajar,
There's not a soul in Rome, I feel,
So near and yet so far.
Well, either I or he must move
Away from here, that's plain.
When we're not neighbours, it may prove
That we shall meet again.

* LXXXVII

TO FESCENNIA

THAT your breath may not smell of your yesterday's drink
A pastille will serve as protection, you think.
It may whiten your teeth ; but it does not avail
To cover the reek of the far-wafted gale
That comes from your nethermost caverns : 'tis blent
With the fumes of your liquor, that odorous scent.
Have done with such tricks then : they do not deceive us :
We know you're a toper : with that you must leave us.

LXXXVIII

ON A PAGE-BOY'S GRAVE

DEAR Alcimus, reft from your loving lord,
  Slain in your spring,
Here is your wayside grave with tender sward
  For covering.
No tottering pile of marble here shall stand,
  That, well I know,
Vain toil should raise for Time's relentless hand
  To overthrow.
Nay, rather shading pine and shapely yew
  Is planted here
And meadow flowers besprinkled with the dew
  Of many a tear.
And take, beloved, for memorial
  This song from me,
A monument that shall not waste nor fall
  While time shall be.
I pray when Lachesis has spun mine hours
  To their last thread,
Thus may I lie with simple trees and flowers
  Above my head.

LXXXIX

TO CINNA

CINNA, you whisper in one's ear
The things that all the world might hear,
You laugh, complain, dispute, and moan
As if 'twere for one ear alone ;

Your silence—aye your clamour—wear
A whispering and furtive air ;
'Tis thus with songs, opinions too ;
Has this disease so mastered you
That when all loyal subjects sing,
You merely hum ' God save the King ' ?

XC

Quod numquam maribus iunctam te, Bassa, uidebam
Quodque tibi moechum fabula nulla dabat,
Omne sed officium circa te semper obibat
Turba tui sexus, non adeunte uiro,
Esse uidebaris, fateor, Lucretia nobis :
At tu, pro facinus, Bassa, fututor eras.
Inter se geminos audes committere cunnos
Mentiturque uirum prodigiosa Venus.
Commenta es dignum Thebano aenigmate monstrum,
Hic, ubi uir non est, ut sit adulterium.

XCI

TO LAELIUS

You blame my verse ; to publish you decline ;
Show us your own or cease to carp at mine.

XCII

Saepe mihi queritur non siccis Cestos ocellis,
Tangi se digito, Mamuriane, tuo.
Non opus est digito : totum tibi Ceston habeto,
Si dest nil aliud, Mamuriane, tibi.
Sed si nec focus est nec nudi sponda grabati
Nec curtus Chiones Antiopesue calix,
Cerea si pendet lumbis et scripta lacerna
Dimidiasque nates Gallica paeda tegit,
Pasceris et nigrae solo nidore culinae
Et bibis inmundam cum cane pronus aquam,
Non culum, neque enim est culus, qui non cacat olim,
Sed fodiam digito qui superest oculum :
Nec me zelotypum nec dixeris esse malignum.
Denique pedica, Mamuriane, satur.

XCIII

COMRADES

HERE sleeps Aquinus—to his friend at rest
Death doth restore him,
That friend who to the mansions of the blest
Had gone before him.
Each was a legion's captain ; in the fight
'Twas his to lead it ;
But each has won a record yet more bright—
Here may'st thou read it.
They lived in honour's hallowed bond, and died
That bond unparted ;
No common thought of envy could divide
The loyal-hearted.

* XCIV

ON AN OLD ACTRESS

WHEN you had lovers by the score
You never knew your part.
But now that lovers are no more,
'Tis learnt by heart.

XCV

TO AELIUS

WHILE others plead, you bawl and shriek—
The purpose we discern ;
The bribes men give you not to speak
Are all the fees you earn.

XCVI

A SLIP OF THE TONGUE

MY halting verse, go bear for me,
Unless the task o'erburden thee,
A word for friend Maternus' ear,
(Speak softly lest the world should hear).

Tell of a certain man we know
Who loves sad clothes and makes a show
Of Baetic wool and garments grey,
But holds that red is far too gay ;
While amethyst will never do
For men—' 'Tis but a woman's hue,'—
Though robes undyed may win his praise,
Or neutral tones, or simple greys.
But though with garish tints he quarrels,
Yet what about his lurid morals ?
' Who is the man ? ' you ask. Somehow
The name has slipped from me, just now.

XCVII

THE FRAUD

You only speak amid a chattering crowd,
Yet claim with eloquence to be endowed,
A claim that anyone can make, no doubt.
Hark, there's a lull—*Now, Naevolus, speak out.*

XCVIII

GOUT IN THE HAND

He's gouty in the feet, you say,
This litigant who will not pay
His counsel's just demand.
The crippling poison, I conclude
From this close-fisted attitude,
Has now attacked his hand.

* XCIX

THE MISER

When you had but one thousand you then did appear
So profuse that we asked God to give
You a fortune to spend ; and within half a year
Four legacies raised it to five.

But you, as though nothing were left you at all,
So miserly now have become
That but once in a year your companions you call
To a dinner with you at your home.

We are seven good men, each an old trusty friend,
But the choicest repast that you offer
Costs you but a few shillings and on us you spend
The most doubtful coins in your coffer.

What boon shall we beg for you, generous sir?
You've got five, so we'll ask God for fifty.
And if in reply He should fifty confer,
You will soon starve to death, Master Thrifty.

C

TO AFRA

'Papa,' 'Mamma,' in childish wise,
How prettily you call!
Yet you appear to others' eyes
The grandmamma of all.

CI

TO HIS DEAD SECRETARY

Thy hand has shared my labours many a time,
Demetrius, and courts have known thy skill;
Ah, for the youth that faded in its prime,
The hand that ere thy twentieth year lay still!
I saw thee parched by fever's fiery breath,
And could not brook that thou shouldst die a slave;
I gave thee freedom's right before thy death—
Would that my boon had freed thee from the grave!
'Patron' you sighed and owned the gift from me,
Then fared to Lethe's waters, glad and free.

CII

VENUS AND MINERVA

By giving Venus such an ugly face
Your artist thought to win Minerva's grace.

CIII

TO SCAEVOLA

'WOULD heaven I were a millionaire,' you cried,
Ere yet for knighthood you were qualified;
'Well would I lodge and sumptuously fare.'
Then gaily laughed the Gods and heard your prayer.
Yet is your raiment shabbier than before,
Your shoes more patched and clouted than of yore,
Ten wretched olives serve you for a feast,
And out of these you save the half at least,
Two meals from every dish you try to squeeze,
And drink Veientan to its muddy lees,
Two pence a day is all that you expend,
One on cold pulse, one on your lady friend.
Live decently henceforth, you cheating knave,
Or else return to heaven the wealth it gave.

CIV

THE HARE AND THE LIONS

THE spotted pard, although the yoke be slight,
Doth bow his neck thereto; the tiger's might,
For all his rage, is by a rod controlled,
And the wild ass doth champ a curb of gold;
The Libyan bear is guided by a bit,
And monster bisons to the rein submit;
A purple halter guides a mighty boar
Vast as the brute in Calydon of yore;
Obedient to a swarthy master's will
Leviathan displays a dancer's skill!
Who would not deem a miracle was here?
Yet doth a marvel greater still appear.
See how the lordly lions condescend
On swift but timid hares their might to spend;
They catch, set free, and gambol with the prey
That safe within their gaping maw doth play.
Freely the quarry passes to and fro
Through fangs that seem to dread the puny foe;
In sooth 'tis generous shame that doth restrain
The might that late a lordly bull hath slain.
Could human art have taught them pity? Nay,
'Tis Caesar's law of mercy these obey.

CV

OLD WINE

Though from Nomentan soil the vintage came,
Yet, as the years rolled on, by slow degrees
With age it changed its character and name ;
So old a cask bears any name it please.

CVI

THE SOBER LOVER

You drown with water every cup
And, though your comrades press you,
The feeble draught you hardly sup !
What madness can possess you ?

Had Naevia sworn to crown your bliss
To-night, we had excused you ;
But since you groan and sigh, by this
We know she has refused you.

Then quaff a cup of fourfold size
And others let us pour you ;
To drown your sorrow must be wise,
If only sleep's before you.

CVII

TO LUCIUS JULIUS

' Your trifling all is vain,
Sing me a nobler strain ! '
Thus you implore me ;
Then grant the ease I crave,
Such as Maecenas gave
To bards before me.

So shall I weave a song
That through the ages long
May never perish ;
Nay, for the funeral flame
Cannot consume a fame
That all men cherish.

Dully the oxen toil
On harsh and barren soil
That yields no treasure.
But fat and fruitful earth
Turns weariness to mirth
And toil to pleasure.

CVIII

TO GALLUS

FAIR is your stately house across the river,
Long be it yours to flourish all your days.
But now with years my feeble footsteps quiver,
And far my garret by Agrippa's bays.

If in the early morn I come to greet you,
A long and weary journey I must take,
Fain would I travel further yet to meet you
And count the toil as naught for friendship's sake.

One client less can give you little sorrow,
'Tis much to me if I withhold your due;
And so I send my book to say good-morrow,
Ere at a later hour I come to you.

* CIX

ON A LITTLE DOG

CATULLUS of a sparrow sung:
But Issa's neater.
A kiss is sweet from ringdove's tongue:
But Issa's sweeter.
She's nicer than the nicest girl,
She's dearer than the dearest pearl;
No pet can beat her.

Whene'er she whines, you'd think that she
Was talking sadly.
Sometimes she cries, sometimes in glee
She barks out gladly.
And when she needs herself to ease,
She lifts her paw and says—'Sir, please,
I want to badly.'

If she is sleeping on your bed
You do not hear her ;
Nor will she soil the blanket spread,
You need not fear her.
So modest is she, we can't find
A suitor of the canine kind
To let come near her.

Lest death should take her from our eyes,
A picture giving
Her very self in shape and size
Portrays her striving.
Put dog and picture both together ;
You'll wonder which is paint, or whether
They both are living.

CX

TO VELOX

' Such lengthy epigrams,' you say, ' affright one.'
True, yours are shorter, for you never write one.

CXI

TO REGULUS

Your work is worthy of a wit
That earned a scholar's reputation,
The pious care you spend on it
Is equal to your inspiration,
And any man who marvels why
Incense and books to you are proffered,
Knows not a gift should typify
His qualities to whom 'tis offered.

CXII

THE UNGRACIOUS PATRON

I used to say ' My Lord ' and ' Sir,'
Ere yet your worthlessness I knew ;
Now I have learned your character,
Plain ' Priscus ' is enough for you.

CXIII

THE ENTERPRISING PUBLISHER

READ, if you have good hours to waste
And leisure moments cloy,
The triflings of my callow taste
While yet I was a boy.
Though long I have forgotten it,
The nonsense you can buy ;
For Pollius will not permit
Its feebleness to die.

CXIV

TO FAUSTINUS

FAENIUS doth own the meadows there
Beside the watered plain,
The little plot and garden fair
That border your domain,
And here his daughter's ashes lie
Beneath a hallowed stone,
Her name thereon : Ah, fain were he
That there were writ his own.
'Twere juster if an aged sire
Had crossed the Stygian wave.
Since fate denied him his desire,
He lives to tend her grave.

CXV

TO PROCILLUS

THERE'S a maid who pines for me,
(Doth your envy stir ?)
Fairer than a swan is she,
Naught can rival her.

Silver, lilies, privet, snow,
All must yield their pride.
(Now your jealous thoughts, I know,
Tend to suicide.)

She by whom my heart is swayed
(Still your angry fright :)
Is a black but comely maid
Darker than the night.

Ant or cricket, pitch, or crow,
These are not so black ;
You'll consent to live, I know.
Put that halter back !

CXVI

ANTULLA'S GRAVE

By Faenius the grove and garden-plot
Are dedicated ;
In honour of the dead this hallowed spot
Is consecrated.
For here Antulla lies, too early slain,
Here sire and mother
Will share her grave, united once again
Each to the other.
Hast thou a hope this holy soil to own ?
Thou must forswear it ;
'Tis given for ever to the dead alone,
None else may share it.

CXVII

TO LUPERCUS

Whene'er we meet you always say
' When may I send a servant, pray,
To fetch your book ? I'll read it through
And straightway send it back to you.'
Nay, trouble not your servant, friend,
To Pear-tree Court is far to send,
And one must climb an awkward stair
To reach my third-floor garret there.
No need is there so far to roam,
You'll find the book much nearer home.
You know the place where Argus died ?
You often pass it—close beside
Is Caesar's forum, and a stall
By columns marked, on which they scrawl
The names and works of bards, to tell
A passer-by what books they sell.

Here seek my works. You need not stop
To tell the owner of the shop—
By name Atrectus—what you seek ;
He'll find you Martial ere you speak ;
His top or second pigeon-hole
Is sure to hold a handsome scroll,
Well smoothed and decked with purple dye.
It costs but half a crown to buy.
' So much,' you say, ' for such a thing ? '
You're wise, 'tis not worth borrowing.

* CXVIII

TO CAECILIANUS

If five score epigrams are not enow,
A reader must be boredom proof, I trow.

BOOK TWO

BOOK TWO

PREFACE

VALERIUS MARTIALIS to his friend DECIANUS GREETING

'What is the good of a prologue,' you say. 'Is it not concession enough to you if I read the epigrams? And, besides, what do you mean to express in the said prologue that you could not express in the verses? I see why tragedies and comedies are allowed one, because they cannot speak for themselves, but epigrams need no herald and are content with their own power of speech—and a hurtful one it is too; they can do their prologising on any page they will. I beseech you, if you think fit to listen, not to do an absurd thing, nor dress a dancer in the long robe. Furthermore consider whether a wooden sword satisfies you as a weapon against a fighter armed with a net. I, for my part, take my place with those spectators who protest against any such unfair conditions.' I verily believe, Decianus, that you are right! Ah, if you only knew with what sort of prologue, and how long a one, you nearly had to deal! Be it then as you desire, and anyone who may chance to read this book shall owe it to you that he comes unwearied to page one.

I

PREFACE

You might have borne three hundred pieces ? True.
But, if you had, could any bear with you ?
Why, little book, of brevity complain ?
It saves a waste of paper : that's a gain ;
The scribe needs but a single hour, and then
To weightier books may turn his busy pen :
A reader too more easily may brook
The flaws and blunders of a tiny book ;
For at a banquet he could read you through,
Ere the mulled wine should cool, so short are you.
Yet though by brevity success you court,
Many will find you long, however short.

* II

TO THE EMPEROR DOMITIAN

Crete gave the mighty name Metellus bore,
Scipio a mightier gained on Afric shore,
But yet more grand the name from conquered Rhine
That, when a child, Germania made thine.
Thy sire and brother won the Jewish crown :
The wreath the Chatti send is all thine own.

III

TO SEXTUS

You disappoint no creditor, you say ?
True, no one ever thought that you would pay.

* IV

TO AMMIANUS

You fondle your mother and she fondles you :
You're her ' brother ' and she is your ' sister.'
Why those mischievous names, I should much like to know ?
Why are you not her son when you've kissed her ?

If you think that such conduct is merely a jest,
You're mistaken, my innocent 'brother.'
When a mother as 'sister' would fain be addressed,
She is neither the one nor the other.

V

TO DECIANUS

To pass my days and nights with you,
That were my lot if I might choose it.
I pledge my life this word is true—
Alas, that fortune should refuse it.
I dwell two weary miles away,
The homeward road my toil will double,
And all the while I know I may
Have but the journey for my trouble.
For when I come, you are not there,
At least I may not come anigh you;
Or I am told that public care
Or private matters occupy you.
I would not grudge two miles and more
To greet my friend and sit beside him:
'Tis weary work to travel four
And, after all, to be denied him.

VI

TO SEVERUS

'PUBLISH soon,' you used to say,
And pretend
That you could not bear delay,
Eager friend;
Now your taste can hardly brook
Just two pages of my book,
Ere you yawn, and turn to look
At the end.

Yet its verses are not new
And unknown,
All the duller ones to you
I had shown;
Then how carefully you'd note them,
In your pocket-book you wrote them,
With intent, perhaps, to quote them
As your own.

Aye, at parties then you passed
Them about ;
On the interest you cast
Little doubt.
Now the book—no lengthy screed—
Takes you half a week to read,
Such enjoyment is indeed
Long drawn out.

As a lazy traveller lags
On his way ;
Short the journey, yet he flags ;
So you stay
For an hour or two to bait,
When you've barely passed the gate;
Yet 'twas you that would not wait
Or delay !

VII

TO ATTICUS

You're a moderate reciter, you've a pretty knack of pleading,
You're a pretty story-writer, and your verse is pretty reading,
You've a pretty style in dancing, and your voice is rather pretty,
If your plays are not entrancing they are moderately witty,
Then your satire's rather comic, and of letters you've a smattering,
While on questions astronomic you've a pretty trick of chattering,
Your music's commonplace with no unusual ability,
At games you show some grace with no remarkable agility.
Tho' you're moderate at all, you've mastered not a thing of them ;
So a sciolist I call you—and the very prince and king of them.

VIII

TO THE READER

Good reader, do not blame the bard
For phrases too obscure or hard,
Or if the grammar seem to halt ;
Believe me that's the scrivener's fault.

He knew your eagerness to read
And sacrificed too much to speed.
If me you blame instead of him,
Your intellect must need be dim :
You call me but a feeble poet ?
I'm not so dull as not to know it ;
My verse is poor, that I admit,
But doubt if you can better it.

IX

A COY MAIDEN

She did not answer when I wrote,
Refusal must be meant ;
And yet I know she read the note—
And silence gives consent.

X

TO POSTUMUS

You give me only half a kiss ;
All thanks for that ; but pray
Grant me a further boon ; 'tis this—
Take half that half away.
Yet higher should the favour be—
Mere speech its worth profanes—
If you would not inflict on me
The quarter that remains.

XI

TO RUFUS

With clouded brow and weary gait,
Unheeding though the hour be late,
Doth Selius tramp the portico,
His weary head bowed down with woe ;
For grief that scarce can be suppressed
He tears his hair and beats his breast.

Deem not this sorrow doth portend
The loss of brother or of friend ;
His wife and sons—long life be theirs—
Are prosperous ; in his affairs
Bailiff and slaves are diligent,
No tenant cheats him of his rent.
' Then what can cause his grief,' you say—
He has to dine at home to-day.

* XII

TO POSTUMUS

WHAT means it, I wonder, the odour of scent
That's on your lips always, of cinnamon blent.
It's suspicious this perfume whenever we meet :
For men always scented don't really smell sweet.

* XIII

TO SEXTUS

BOTH the judge and the counsel say you're in their debt :
You had best pay the one where most credit you'll get.

XIV

THE DINER-OUT

THERE'S nothing Selius will not do or dare
Rather than sup at home on meagre fare ;
He haunts the running-ground and swears 'tis true
That swift Achilles never ran like you,
Paulinus ; failing him he next may go
And take his chance at Jason's portico.
That too is blank, so off to Isis' shrine—
Some courtesan may take him home to dine.
Failure once more ! Well, Pompey's porch may do,
Or, should that fail, perhaps his avenue :
He hurries next to Faustus' baths and then
To Lupus' and to Gryllus' murky den.
Still no success ! He bathes three times and more—
Heaven sends no better fortune than before.

So back he goes to spy if anyone
Perchance is basking in the evening sun
About Europa's porch and leafy bower—
There's just a chance of one tho' late the hour.
O amorous bull, pray pity Selius' plight,
And make him dine with you in heaven to-night.

* XV

TO HORMUS

From your cup no one ever to drink you allow:
But it really is kindness not pride that you show.

XVI

THE REMEDY

Now Zoilus is ill, 'tis said;
But rumour's a deceiver.
'Tis only that his scarlet bed
Has given him scarlet fever.

He longed to make a fool's display
(Good health alone prevented)
Of downy cushions, hangings gay
With Tyrian dyes and scented.

Not Aesculapius' art divine
Is needed, I assure him;
If he would change his bed for mine
I know that it would cure him.

XVII

THE LADY BARBER

A lady barber there doth dwell
Just where Suburra's vale emerges
To join the place where Argus fell,
Where hang the lictors' bloody scourges.
She sits among the cobblers' booths
That take up half the street or block it;
No chin this barber ever smooths!
What is it that she trims?—Your pocket.

XVIII

TWO OF A TRADE

I COURT your dinners, truth to tell,
'Tis mean as I'm aware ;
But you're a parasite as well—
And so we are a pair.

I come to call, and hear that you
Have gone to call elsewhere ;
You cringe before a patron too—
And so we are a pair.

In town I join your escort's van
And walk before you there ;
But you escort some other man—
And so we are a pair.

If serve I must, a master free
Shall be the boon I crave ;
Though ill that fate, 'tis worse to be
The servant of a slave.

XIX

ON ZOILUS

To think that I would fawn on you
For dinner—such a dinner too
As yours, ah, what a fate !
He that could face your daintiest fare,
Good Zoilus, had better share
With Lazarus at the gate.

* XX

THE PURCHASED MUSE

PAUL reads as his own all the poems he buys.
Well, all that he pays for is his, I surmise.

XXI

TO POSTUMUS

Some you embrace. Some by the hand you shake ;
Which would I choose ? Your hand, for mercy's sake.

XXII

ON THE SAME

Oh, Phoebus and ye sisters nine,
Why plague your bard ? What sin is mine ?
What have I done amiss
That Postumus, who distantly
Has heretofore saluted me,
Now greets me with a kiss ?

XXIII

ON THE SAME

I will not give his name, although you press me,
Let ' Postumus ' suffice you in my verse.
He's well avenged when e'er he doth caress me ;
Dare I provoke and make his vengeance worse ?

XXIV

A DIALOGUE

Candidus : If law your innocence abuse,
I'll don the gown defendants use,
And paler far my cheek shall be
Than though the danger threatened me ;
If driven from our Motherland
With you I'll seek an alien strand,
For shoals and rocks are naught to dare
With you an exile's lot to share.
Martial : Well, fate has granted wealth to you.
Candidus : 'Twas meant for one and not for two.

Martial : But would you give the half of it ?
Candidus : That's much to ask you must admit.
Martial : Will you give anything to me ?
What ? You refuse ? It's plain to see
What ' sharing ' means ; your generous mood
Gives me the ill and keeps the good.

XXV

TO GALLA

You always promise happiness
And still your faith betray ;
If ' yes ' means ' no ' and ' no ' means ' yes,'
Say ' no ' to me I pray.

XXVI

TO BITHYNICUS

Though you hope that her cough will soon carry her off,
For gasping and swooning is she,
Do not flatter yourself that you'll finger her pelf ;
For her faint is a feint with an ' e.'

XXVII

CUPBOARD LOVE

Whene'er you plead in court or read your verses,
Watch Selius fishing for an invitation.
With wild applause your words he intersperses,
' Perfect,' ' Hear, hear,' ' 'Tis said to admiration,'
' Bravo,' ' How grand the style ! ' ' How good the matter ! '—
Then you invite him, just to stop his chatter.

XXVIII

Rideto multum qui te, Sextille, cinaedum
Dixerit et digitum porrigito medium.
Sed nec pedico es nec tu, Sextille, fututor,
Calda Vetustinae nec tibi bucca placet.
Ex istis nihil es fateor, Sextille : quid ergo es ?
Nescio, sed tu scis res superesse duas.

XXIX

TO RUFUS

On a front bench to let the world admire
He sits ; his jewelled fingers flash and glow,
Deeply his cloak has drunk the dyes of Tyre,
His robe is whiter than the virgin snow.

His locks diffuse their perfume all around,
White are his glittering arms without an hair,
New sandals daily on his feet are bound,
And softest hide is all that he can bear.

The crescent on his scarlet boot is seen,
His patch-bespangled brow bears many a star ;
Dost know the creature ? Strip his forehead clean,
The brands thereon tell what his titles are.

XXX

TO GAIUS

I chanced to ask a loan—a hundred merely ;
E'en as a gift that should not task severely
A wealthy friend, and so I asked him, knowing
His pockets bulge with cash to overflowing.
' Go to the Bar,' says he, ' get rich by pleading '—
'Tis cash, not counsel, Gaius, that I'm needing.

* XXXI

THE PARAGON

I know Jenny well : she's a right proper lass :
Not a girl in the town can her kisses surpass.

XXXII

TO HIS PATRON

You would not plead my cause with Balbus, lest
You might offend and lose his interest :
Against Licinus next I brought a suit ;
You thought him far too great to prosecute :

Though Patrobas should trespass on my field,
He's Nero's freedman, so you bid me yield :
Or if Laronia keep the slaves I lend her,
A rich old widow, you will not offend her.
To serve a servant is a lot abhorred ;
Let him be free who is my overlord.

XXXIII

TO PHILAENIS

You ask the reasons why I never do
Kiss you ?
Fair locks I love and you have none,
That's one.
Your face is of the beetroot's hue,
That's two.
Your one blear eye can hardly see,
That's three.
That act all nature might appal,
That's all.

* XXXIV

TO GALLA

To buy a young minion you've spent all your gold,
And let your three children go hungry and cold,
While you force him on you his male vigour to prove,
Who are long past the age for legitimate love.
May you grow old together, and never another
Embrace you but he, you unnatural mother.

* XXXV

TO PHOEBUS

As your legs are as curved as the moon's horns when new,
Then your bath should be shaped like a drinking-horn too.

XXXVI

TO PANNYCHUS

I WOULD not have you curl your hair,
Though tangled locks I can't endure ;
Trim hands and skin should never bear
The patent signs of manicure.

Ape not the beardless Eastern style,
The culprit's sloven chin abhor !
To pose as less than man is vile,
'Tis barbarous to pose as more.

Though manhood's outward looks you wear
In hirsute limb and bearded face,
Your mind the while is plucked and bare,
Of manly growth there's not a trace.

XXXVII

TO CAECILIANUS

SCARCE was the dinner served, ere you
Had swept away our every dish ;
Sow's udder, woodcock meant for two,
Pig's ear, the choicest kinds of fish,
The lamprey and the chicken's thigh,
The pigeon stewed in sauces rare—
And we, the hungry company,
Had nothing left to do but stare !
That bulging cloth, a dripping pack,
Your slave bore off. Pretend or feel
Some shame, and put our dinner back ;
'Twas not for your to-morrow's meal.

XXXVIII

TO LINUS

YOU ask me how my farm can pay,
Since little it will bear ;
It pays me thus.—'Tis far away
And you are never there.

XXXIX

FINE FEATHERS

You took a woman off the street,
  You gave her dresses rich and rare,
And yet the penitential sheet
  She might with greater fitness wear.

XL

ON TONGILIUS

Ague they say! I know what his complaint is,
  A case of greed suppressed and thirst unsated:
Exhibit thrushes fat and other dainties;
  Red mullets too and pike are indicated;
With fine old port his thirst should be abated,
  And rare liqueurs stored in their slender bottles—
The faculty have all miscalculated
  Hydropathy won't cure such fevered throttles.

XLI

TO MAXIMINA

'Laugh, maiden, laugh, if thou be wise,'—
  Aye, that methinks was Ovid's rede;
And yet not all doth he advise;
  But if he spake to all indeed
  The poet's saw thou can'st not plead
Who long are past thy maidenhood,
  And hast, for teeth to serve thy need,
Three stumps the hue of pitch or wood.

So if thou trust thy glass and me,
  Put thoughts of laughter out of mind;
The merry mood is not for thee,
  Nor for the fops a blustering wind.
  These shun the jostling of their kind,
The beldame with her powdered grace
  Fears rain and is not glad to find
Bright sunshine on her painted face.

Wear looks austere, like Priam's Queen
Or such as Hector's consort wore,
And lest a smile should e'er be seen,
No plays or feasts for evermore!
All merriment must thou abhor
With aught that might provoke to it;
The depths of grief must thou explore,
Away with quips and roguish wit,

And rather haunt some house of woe
Where mourning widows sigh and moan,
If mother's tears or sister's flow
Take thou their sorrows for thine own;
Be thine the Tragic muse alone,
And thus a wiser maxim keep—
Herein is crafty counsel shown—
'If thou be wise, weep, lady, weep.'

* XLII

TO ZOILUS

The bath-water's fouled when your buttocks you swill.
Just put in your head; 'twill be dirtier still.

* XLIII

TO CANDIDUS

The proverb goes—'Let friends together profit.'
And this is your interpretation of it.
You sport a toga of Tarentine wool,
Such tufts as from the Parman flocks they pull:
Mine is so old you'd think a bull had torn it,
Or that some scarecrow in the ring had worn it.
Your Tyrian mantle's one of Cadmus own:
My poor red cloak would scarce fetch half-a-crown.
Your marble rounds on Indian ivory rest:
My table's wood and is on drain-pipes pressed.
For you huge mullets lie in golden dish:
I from red earthen plates eat red crawfish.
A troop of pages serve your every need:
I help myself and have no Ganymede.
'Profit' for you: for your poor friend 'starvation.'
That of the proverb's your interpretation.

XLIV

ON HUNKS

If Hunks should see me buy a coat,
A slave, or something worth a groat,
He shudders at my spendthrift whim,
And lest I beg a loan of him—
Though I have known him many a year—
He whispers so that I may hear:—
'Four thousand Sesterces are due
To Phoebus, and Secundus too
Is pressing for his debt, 'tis seven;
Philetus duns me for eleven:
I've not a farthing left to spend.'
How clever, my ingenious friend!
Were I to ask, refusing me
Would wound your generosity;
It needs must be a harder task
Refusing what I do not ask.

* XLV

TO GLYPTUS

When your duty you never could do to your wife,
Why offer yourself to the surgeon's sharp knife?

* XLVI

TO NAEVOLUS

Gay as the flowers that Hybla shows in spring,
What time the bees are plundering on the wing,
So shine your presses with their mantles bright,
So gleams your chest with evening wrappers white,
Spoils of her flocks Apulia sent to you,
Enough to clothe a Roman tribe anew.
And yet—O shame—you look with careless eye
Upon your friend who passes shivering by
In threadbare coat, and do not think to give
A rag or two to keep him just alive.
You would not feel the loss, you need not fear:
The moths alone would be the sufferers here.

XLVII

Subdola famosae moneo fuge retia moechae,
Leuior o conchis, Galle, Cytheriacis.
Confidis natibus ? Non est pedico maritus :
Quae faciat duo sunt : irrumat aut futuit.

XLVIII

THE POET'S NEEDS

Rufus, my simple tastes demand
But modest things to smooth my path,
Good wine and food, a barber and
A bath,
Chessmen, a board on which to play,
A friend whose tastes and mine agree,
Some books but leaving the choosing pray
To me.

A young and well-grown serving lad,
One maid if comely would not hurt,
'Twould keep him busy if he had
A flirt.
Ah, friend, if you would give me these,
Though in a small provincial home,
I'd leave you all the luxuries
Of Rome.

* XLIX

ATTRACTION

'I won't marry Betty : she's too fond of men,'
'Well, boys find her charming.' 'I'll marry her then.'

L

Quod fellas et aquam potas, nil, Lesbia, peccas.
Qua tibi parte opus est, Lesbia, sumis aquam.

LI

VNUS saepe tibi tota denarius arca
Cum sit et hic culo tritior, Hylle, tuo,
Non tamen hunc pistor, non auferet hunc tibi copo,
Sed si quis nimio pene superbus erit.
Infelix uenter spectat conuiuia culi
Et semper miser hic esurit, ille uorat.

LII

THREE IN ONE

O BATHING man, I like your plan
Of counting, for I heard
Stout Spatale was charged as three,
And paid without a word.

LIII

TO MAXIMUS

YOU would be free, but cannot ? that's a lie ;
'Tis easy, there's a simple plan to try.
Cease hunting for choice dinners everywhere,
And be content to drink vin ordinaire ;
Let gold inlay on Cinna's table shine,
Nor envy him ; and wear a coat like mine,
Waste not your substance on a courtesan ;
Lodge simply—'tis enough for any man.
Rule thus your mind to love but simple things
And you'll be freer than the Parthian Kings.

* LIV

TO LINUS

YOUR wife is not lacking in prudence or spite,
And that she has shown very plain ;
She has bidden an eunuch to watch you at night,
And thinks then you chaste will remain.

LV

TO SEXTUS

I OFFERED love—you ask for awe ;
Then I'll obey you and revere ;
But don't forget the ancient saw
That love will never dwell with fear.

* LVI

TO GALLUS

THOSE Libyan rogues accuse your wife of greed,
And call her avaricious ; yes, indeed !
But such a charge of rankest falsehood savours ;
She rather is too generous with her favours.

LVII

THE DANDY

JUST watch the fellow yonder stroll along !
The costliest of clothes he loves to wear,
And after him there comes a motley throng
Of clients spruce and slaves with curly hair.
His chair is gay and decked with curtains fair;
Say you the smartest dandy in the town ?
Just now to buy a meal of plainest fare
He pawned his only ring for half-a-crown.

LVIII

TO ZOILUS

YOUR glossy clothes are superfine,
You mock my old ones and abhor them ;
At least, if threadbare, they're mine own,
I didn't cheat the tailor for them.

LIX

THE BANQUETING-HALL

You know my name, ' The little feasting hall ' ?
Take roses, unguents, wine, and feast withal ;
But gaze with me at Caesar's dome which saith,
' A God was I—and died ! Forget not death.'

* LX

TO HYLLUS

My lad, it's a captain's good lady you're meeting,
Though you think if you're caught you'll get off with a beating.
He's a sword and he'll use it. ' Not legal '—you say.
Well, are they quite legal, your goings-on, pray ?

LXI

Cum tibi uernarent dubia lanugine malae,
  Lambebat medios improba lingua viros.
Postquam triste caput fastidia uispillonum
  Et miseri meruit taedia carnificis,
Uteris ore aliter nimiaque aerugine captus
  Adlatras nomen quod tibi cumque datur.
Haereat inguinibus potius tam noxia lingua :
  Nam cum fellaret, purior illa fuit.

LXII

Quod pectus, quod crura tibi, quod bracchia uellis,
  Quod cincta est breuibus mentula tonsa pilis,
Hoc praestas, Labiene, tuae (quis nescit ?) amicae.
  Cui praestas, culum quod, Labiene, pilas ?

LXIII

TO MILICHUS

Your capital was always small,
  Yet in the mart you gave
The thousand pounds that made your all
  To buy a pretty slave.

For love that price was high to pay
E'en with a bulging purse.
What's that ? You're not in love you say—
That makes the matter worse.

LXIV

TO TAURUS

Once at the Bar a longing look you cast,
Anon 'twas rhetoric you thought inspiring,
Now you are Nestor's age, and nearly past
The time when others think about retiring.
Begin, if rhetoric attracts you greatly,
There's room for teachers—three have died just lately.

But should you think you lack the teacher's skill
Or spirit, or are doubtful of succeeding,
The courts have seethed with litigants, until
The Marsyas himself might turn to pleading.
Delay no more—we're growing tired of waiting—
Or you are like to die, still hesitating.

* LXV

A GRIEVOUS LOSS

' Why does friend Johnson wear that gloomy look ? '
' Good cause,' you say, ' this very morn I took
My wife's corpse to the grave.' ' Oh dear, oh dear,
Your rich old wife, no more we'll see her here.
And all her money now is yours to spend !
I am indeed distressed, my worthy friend.'

* LXVI

TO LALAGE

Because one curl had come unbound
I hear you took your glass
And called your maid, and to the ground
Struck down the hapless lass.

Cease, madam, pray, your hair to tire
And fill your girls with terror.
A razor is what you require
To make you like your mirror.

Why should they your caprice obey,
And to your fancies pander.
Cut all those cruel locks away,
Or touch a salamander.

* LXVII

TO POSTUMUS

WHENEVER I meet you, wherever I go,
Ten times in one hour it is—' How do you do? '
That ' How do you do ? ' is your first word each day :
It is plain that there is not much doing *your* way.

* LXVIII

TO OLUS

CALL it not pride, no longer I
Can greet you as your thrall.
I've won the cap of liberty,
Although it cost mine all.

The man whose mean desires accord
With all that masters crave
Must cringe ; but he shall need no lord
Who doth not need a slave.

LXIX

TO CLASSICUS

ALL dinner invitations grieve you ?
I'm sorry, sir, I can't believe you.
The famous epicures of Rome
Were always pleased to dine from home.
Why, if it bores you, should you go ?
' I must,' you say—Ah yes, we know
All parasites that plea advance.
But if you're serious, now's your chance :
Friend Melior bids you dine to-day,
So play the man and say him nay.

LXX

Non uis in solio prius lauari
Quemquam, Cotile. Causa quae, nisi haec est,
Undis ne fouearis irrumatis ?
Primus te licet abluas : necesse est
Ante hic mentula quam caput lauetur.

LXXI

TO CAECILIANUS

One simple trick I note in you,
That when I read a verse or two,
You instantly begin to quote
Catullus or some bard of note ;
You mean to compliment my verse
Perhaps by citing something worse,
And though the contrast flatters me
With its inferiority—
Assuming this intent alone,
'Twere better you should quote your own.

* LXXII

TO POSTUMUS

A thing, I am told, happened yesterday night,
Which I cannot approve, for I don't think it right.
I'm informed you received such a tempest of knocks
As the pantaloon gets when they play Box and Cox.
And, what's more surprising, folk now are repeating
'Twas Caecilius gave you that most unkind beating.
You declare it's not true ; and I hope it as well,
But the fellow has witnesses, so people tell.

* LXXIII

Quid faciat uolt scire Lyris : quod sobria : fellat.

* LXXIV

TO MATERNUS

BEHIND and before him the clients pace slow
Attending Saufeius wherever he go ;
Such crowds as great Regulus brings from the court
When his client's acquitted and cuts his hair short.
Don't envy him, friend, for his train of dependants :
He borrows the money to pay their attendance.

* LXXV

IN THE CIRCUS

A LION wont to cower beneath the whip,
Within whose jaws the trainer oft would slip
His hand unharmed, forgot its gentle ways
And showed the fury of its Libyan days.
Two boys belonging to the youthful band,
Who with their rakes smooth out the bloody sand,
The savage beast with fangs accursèd slew—
A greater crime the circus never knew.
Well might we cry—' Thou cruel thief, forbear.
Learn from our Roman wolf young lives to spare.'

* LXXVI

THE BITER BIT

YOUR share of Marius' estate
Is just four pounds of battered plate.
You thought you'd cornered him : i' feg,
The boot is on the other leg.

LXXVII

TO COSCONIUS

TRY greasing wheels ; your taste reveals
You might be fit for that ;
Nay, truth to tell, 'twould suit you well
Because your wits are fat.

For length you damn my epigram!
Is Brutus' boy too small?
Your critic eyes perhaps despise
Colossus as too tall?

'Tis plain indeed you never read
Marsus or Pedo sage;
One piece of each will often reach
Beyond a single page.

A word remove and I will prove
You do my poem wrong.
Your couplets are too long by far—
That is two lines too long.

LXXVIII

TO CAECILIANUS

YOUR fish won't keep in Summer-time? Why not?
You can't have tried the baths that you call hot.

* LXXIX

TO NASICA

YOU only asked me when you know
I've asked another man to dine.
And, as to-day I eat at home,
Your invitation I decline.

* LXXX

SELF SLAIN

WHILE Fannius the foeman fled,
He madly pierced his side,
And, lest he should be stricken dead,
By his own hand he died.

* LXXXI

TO ZOILUS

THOUGH in a gorgeous litter you may ride,
It seems a pauper's bier when you're inside.

LXXXII

TO PONTICUS

WHY maim your slave by cutting out
The wretch's tongue, you brute,
When all the city talks about
Your crimes—though he is mute?

* LXXXIII

TO A JEALOUS HUSBAND

YOU have robbed the young gallant of nostrils and ears,
And his face now of both is bereft.
But your vengeance remains incomplete it appears;
He has still got another part left.

LXXXIV

MOLLIS erat facilisque uiris Poeantius heros:
Uolnera sic Paridis dicitur ulta Venus.
Cur lingat cunnum Siculus Sertorius, hoc est:
Ab hoc occisus, Rufe, uidetur Eryx.

* LXXXV

A CHRISTMAS GIFT

A WICKER flask with water iced inside
I send you as my gift this Christmas-tide.
You'll say perhaps it does not suit the season.
I want a summer suit: that is the reason.

LXXXVI

TO CLASSICUS

TRICK verses I would never plan—that is not my endeavour;
My lines read backwards will not scan on any scheme whatever;
You will not hear in verse of mine that feeble iteration
Whereby doth echo tag each line—a Greek abomination.

And though no Attis here shall spout smooth doggerel—you know it ?
'Tis sound with all the sense left out—am I so vile a poet ?
What if one bade a runner try contortions acrobatic ?
Ask Ladas this, and his reply methinks will be emphatic.
A silly task it is to make all difficulties double,
And foolery for fooling's sake is merely wasted trouble.
Such tricks let dull Palaemon do, his dullards entertaining,
And let me please the chosen few whose ear is worth the gaining.

* LXXXVII

TO SEXTUS

You pretend for your kisses the girls are athirst,
With your cheeks, like a diver's, just ready to burst.

* LXXXVIII

TO MAMERCUS

You never recite, though you pose as a poet.
Well, for that many thanks : we will gladly forgo it.

* LXXXIX

TO GAURUS

I can pardon your habit of spending the night
O'er the wine-cup ; for Cato in that did delight.
And though with your verses the Muses you sully,
I praise them ; for here you take pattern by Tully.
When you vomit, you do as Mark Antony did ;
And your greed by Apicius' shadow is hid.
But when you indulge in your beastliest tricks,
To find you a model I'm quite in a fix.

XC

TO QUINTILIAN

Guide of our wayward youth, whose golden tongue
Is Rome's delight and boast, if I am wrong
In making haste to live whilst poor and young,
Forgive me ; others dally all too long ;

These gather gold beyond their fathers' dreams,
  Ancestral busts their crowded halls might fill—
To me my smoke-stained cot more pleasant seems,
  The earth's wild verdure and the running rill,
A comely slave, a kind but simple wife,
  Nights of soft sleep and days unmarred of strife.

XCI

TO THE EMPEROR TITUS: A PETITION

Thou glory of the world, our destinies,
  Our very faith in heaven, are stayed on thee.
Should verse of mine find favour in thine eyes,
  Though often writ in haste, 'twill plead for me:
Grant me a father's right; though fate's decree
  Deny me fatherhood, that wrong redress;
If I have failed, may this my comfort be,
  And this the generous guerdon of success.

XCII

THE PETITION GRANTED

Now with the rights of children three
Caesar rewards my Muse and me,
  And mateless I'll remain.
The boon that one alone can give
By his divine prerogative
  Must not be made in vain.

* XCIII

EPILOGUE. TO REGULUS

'Where's number ONE,' you say, 'if this book's TWO?'
My first is shy, so what am I to do?
But if in this the First you'd rather see,
Take one away, and then it ONE will be.

BOOK THREE

I

A PREFACE FROM GAUL

This verse from Gaul is alien born,
Whatever be its worth,
And though the Roman garb adorn
The land that gave it birth.

Should you prefer the former book,
Yet I will not repine ;
Such preference I lightly brook
Since both of them are mine.

'Tis fit indeed that verse from Rome
Should be the best of all,
For e'en a house-slave born at home
Is better than a Gaul.

II

THE WISE CHOICE

My little book, who shall thy champion be ?
Choose thee a patron soon, or, I foresee,
Snatched to a gloomy kitchen in a trice
Thou shalt wrap dripping fish or pungent spice ;
Thy clammy end the scullion shall decree ;
Sayst thou that to Faustinus thou wouldst flee ?
A happy choice—from ills shalt thou be free
Safe in his cedar-scented paradise,
My little book,
For bindings rich no niggard hand hath he,
But thou shalt dwell a tome of high degree
With bosses decked and many a gay device
In purple rare or scarlet dyes of price,
And critics shall not dare to mangle thee,
My little book.

III

THE BATHER

You veil your only charm, a pretty face,
And show a form that frights the bathing-place.
So, bidden by the water-nymphs, I pray,
Bathe fully dressed or cast your veil away.

IV

AN APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE

SEEK Rome, my book, and if she question thee
Whence thou art come, say, 'Down Aemilian Road,'
And if she ask the place of my abode
Tell her Cornelius' Forum harbours me;
Confess that here I sojourn to be free
From all her pomp and show, a weary load,
And shall return when I forget to be
A bard and sing a jingling lyric ode.

* V

RECOMMENDATIONS

LITTLE book, starting off to great Rome all alone,
Would you have me commend you to many or one?
One's enough, pray believe me; for he'll love you well,
Dear Julius, of whom you have oft heard me tell.
He lives by the Closed Colonnade, in the flat
Which Daphnis some years ago used to live at.
Though you're covered with dust when before her you stand
His wife will give welcome with heart and with hand.
If you see them together, or him first, or her,
Just say—'twill suffice—'Marcus' greetings I bear.'
A letter to strangers may strangers commend;
There's no need for long talk when you deal with a friend.

VI

TO MARCELLINUS

YOUR budding beard is shorn—the day
Hath earned a double rite,
For on this lucky date in May
Your father saw the light.

On him hath Fortune never frowned—
To-day his life began
In happiness that now is crowned—
His son becomes a man.

VII

FREE DINNERS

Farewell thou paltry dole, no more
The parboiled bath-man at the door
Hands out the toil-worn client's due.
Poor starvelings, what a blow to you !

The bounty given in Nero's day
Is gone ! I know that ye will say,
' We'll fence no more ; our cry shall be
" Fixed salaries and dinners free ! " '

VIII

IN THE COUNTRY OF THE BLIND

'Tis one-eyed Thais sets his love aglow ;
She is half-blind—*and he entirely so.*

IX

ON CINNA

He publishes lampoons on me, 'tis said ;
How can he publish who is never read ?

* X

THE SPENDTHRIFT

Young Scatterbag's father while he was alive
To him one pound per diem did pay ;
For he knew that a daily supply he must give,
Or the spendthrift would fling all away.
But now in his will he has put down his name
As heir to the total estate—
'Twere better for him, and would come to the same,
To have been disinherited straight.

XI

TO QUINTUS

DEAR Quintus, why resent my joke ?
The one-eyed hag of whom I spoke
Was Thais, and your lady's name
Hermione—'tis not the same
Or similar. Had I said Thais,
Whereas your lady-love was Lais,
You might complain of that ; beside
You swear your love is not one-eyed !
I called her lover ' Quintus '—true :
Let's change to ' Sextus '—will that do ?

XII

TO FABULLUS

WHEN yesterday we came to dine,
I own you gave us unguents fine,
But there was not a thing to eat.
Methinks a curious sort of treat.
Perhaps you thought your guests had died
And came there to be mummified !

XIII

TO NAEVIA

YOU would not carve the hare : it was not basted,
So you declared : the mullet went untasted :
The boar was more than high—our senses proved it—
You called it ' over-fresh,' and then removed it.
' Uneatable and raw,' you kept repeating ;
In proof whereof you gave your cook a beating.
A vain excuse ; we're safe beyond all question.
A meal of nothing gives no indigestion.

* XIV

THE CANCELLED DOLE

A STARVELING came from Spain of late ;
But when he reached the city gate
He heard about the dole in Rome,
And turned again to starve at home.

XV

THE TRUSTFUL SWAIN

None takes such low security
Though he is poor. My praise is just.
For Cordus, tho' he cannot see,
Accepts his lady-love on trust.

XVI

THE PARVENU

You give a gladiators' show,
Vain cobbler Kinglet, prince of leather,
A fortune to your awl you owe,
The sword destroys it altogether.

You're drunk, no sober man would skin
His pocket in this careless manner.
If you go on as you begin
You soon must be a worthless Tanner.

I hope your foolish whim is past;
Here's my advice, if you will take it;
Retrench—the chance may be your last,
No prudent cobbler should forsake it.

* XVII

TRANSFORMATION

A tart passed at table was so very hot
It burned people's hands as to each man it got;
But Sam was still hotter to eat it; and so
He puffed out his cheeks and upon it did blow.
The tartlet was cooled, nor could any one hurt;
But nobody touched it; 'twas turned into dirt.

* XVIII

TO THE POET MAXIMUS

You began by remarking your throat was quite sore.
We accept your excuse: but pray read us no more.

* XIX

THE BRONZE BEAR

WHERE beasts in effigy the plane-grove grace,
Hard by the ' Hundred Columns ' has its place
A bear in bronze. Young Hylas in its jaw
Thrust his fair hand to try the gaping maw.
But lo, a viper grim was lurking there,
Alert and far more deadly than the bear.
The boy knew nothing till he felt the sting.
Shame that the bear was not a living thing !

* XX

THE MERRY SOUL

TELL me, my Muse, what Canius does this morn.
Does he record for ages yet unborn
The deeds of Claudius, or is his theme
The screeds that foolish scribblers Nero's deem ?
Does he the jests of naughty Phaedrus try,
Epic severe and wanton elegy,
And don the buskin of, great Sophocles,
Or in the ' Poet's Corner ' loll at ease
Telling gay stories full of Attic grace,
Or in the porch of Isis' temple pace,
Or idly stroll along the portico,
Where Jason and his men their pictures show ?
Perchance some bathhouse sees him take a dipper,
Titus or Tigellinus or Agrippa ;
Or else he sits and walks quite free from care
Amid the box-trees where Europa fair
Enjoys the sun ; or in some snug retreat
He and Lucanus and friend Tullus meet.
It may be that near Baiae's steaming bay
He idly sails the Lucrine all the day,
Or drives with Pollio those four short miles—
' Do you want to know what Canius does ? He smiles.'

* XXI

GOOD FOR EVIL

THE slave he'd branded saved his proscribed lord,
Or rather shamed him : that's the better word.

* XXII

TO APICIUS

You had spent sixty thousand on gorging your fill,
And there only remained a poor ten thousand still.
That to you was starvation ; so into your cup
You poured deadly poison and drank the lot up.
You were always a gourmet, of that I am sure ;
But by death you were proved the complete epicure.

* XXIII

'TO BE CONSUMED ON THE PREMISES'

To your servants behind you you hand every dish :
We'll call it your footmen's repast, if you wish.

* XXIV

A STRANGE ACCIDENT

A HE-GOAT caught while gnawing down a vine
Was dragged to die at Bacchus' holy shrine.
A Tuscan priest prepared the rogue to slay
And bade a rustic who had come that way
With sickle sharp to geld the unclean beast,
Lest the rank odour should offend the feast.
Then leaning o'er the altar with his knife
He pressed it down to rob it of its life.
But as he leaned, a hernia came to view,
And the dull rustic without more ado
Cut off the titbit, thinking, I suppose,
The gods were honoured by such meats as those.
So he's a Gaul who, when the rite began,
A Tuscan was, but now no more a man.

XXV

A FRIGID ORATOR

No one can bear your bath, so hot it is ;
But there's a cure ; I'll tell you what to do.
Bring Sabineius there ; a speech of his
Once froze the baths of Nero through and through.

XXVI

TO CANDIDUS

THE harvest of your vast estate
And all the hoarded wealth you own,
Your cup of gold and priceless plate
Are all reserved for you alone.

Your Massic and Opimian rare
For others are too exquisite,
And no man is allowed to share
The products of your learned wit.

These things are yours, I don't dispute
So plain a fact: upon my life
Your ownership is absolute
In all you have—except your wife.

XXVII

TO GALLUS

YOU ask me not to dine although
I've often entertained you;
If all your hosts were treated so
I never had arraigned you;

But you are mean to me alone,
So neither can be blameless;
That I'm a fool I freely own
And, Gallus, you are shameless.

* XXVIII

TO NESTOR

YOU wonder why Marius' ear smells so vile?
You've been whispering to him, good sir, quite a while.

XXIX

ON ZOILUS

NOW Zoilus, the knight, to Saturn brings
Fetters and chains; they were his former rings.

XXX

TO GARGILIANUS

No money doles now patrons give,
You're fed but never feed ;
Yet still you try in town to live,
And somehow you succeed.

Your coat is passing vile, 'tis true ;
You rent a dingy den ;
For these and for your pleasures too
You sponge on other men.

' My costs of living,' so you say,
' Are reasonably small.'
If reason be in question, pray,
Why should you live at all ?

* XXXI

TO RUFINUS

You possess, I allow it, wide acres of land,
And your houses in town spacious gardens command,
Many debtors bow low to your full money-chests,
And dishes of gold bear the meat at your feasts.
But don't be too scornful, for Didymus of yore
And to-day Philomelus possesses far more.

XXXII

TO MATRONIA

'Tis not your age that makes me cold,
That's no impediment ;
But you are something more than old,
You're dead to all intent.

To Hecuba or Niobe
My heart perhaps had warmed,
But not when their humanity
Was utterly transformed.

XXXIII

'GIVE ME FAIR AMARYLLIS'

I'd choose a maiden gently born ;
But if it may not be,
A slave-born maid I would not scorn
Whose lord had set her free.

Or e'en a serving-wench at worst,
If these my love rebuff ;
Nay, I would choose the bond-maid first,
If she were fair enough.

XXXIV

TO CHIONE

You're cold as snow—Ah, Chione,
Your name and nature thus agree ;
Yet is that name unfitting too—
For how can snow be dark like you ?

XXXV

ON A BAS-RELIEF

They're Pheidias' fish, engraved by him,
Add water—and behold they swim.

* XXXVI

TO FABIANUS

The duties you claim from a friend newly made
You expect, Fabianus, by me should be paid.
To come every morning my patron to greet,
And follow your chair in the cold muddy street,
To be with you still at the close of the day,
When you bathe at Agrippa's, right out of my way,
And I bathe with Titus. Is this my reward
For thirty long years of attentive regard ?

I've always been ready and zealous in office,
But yet you esteem me no more than a novice.
My toga—I bought it myself—has worn thin :
Don't you think now my time of discharge might begin ?

XXXVII

A MEAN TRICK

Rich friends, 'tis your fashion to get in a passion
With humble dependants, or feign it.
Though not very nice, 'tis a saving device,
Economy bids you retain it.

XXXVIII

LIFE IN ROME

Martial : What motive, Sextus, brings you up to town ?
Some idle hope of fortune or renown ?
Sextus : I'll be a pleader : all our courts shall know
I am more eloquent than Cicero.
Martial : So Civis thought and Atestinus too,
—You know them—but their rent is overdue.
Sextus : If that should fail, my verses might atone ;
They're worthy Virgil's pen, as you will own.
Martial : The man is mad ; our Virgils you may meet
And threadbare Ovids, cowering in the street.
Sextus : I'll find a patron—others have before—
Martial : And all have starved excepting three or four.
Sextus : I mean to live here—tell me how I can.
Martial : By luck alone, if you're an honest man.

XXXIX

ONE EYE BETTER THAN NONE

As fair as Ida's swan is he
Lycoris dotes upon.
Well can that one-eyed beldame see
Tho' half her sight is gone !

* XL

TO TELESINUS

JUST because from the wealth that your coffers contain
You consented a thousand to lend,
You think you've obliged me : but let me explain,
It's the one who repays that's the friend.

* XLI

ON AN EMBOSSED GOBLET

SET on this bowl, by Mentor's hand portrayed,
The lizard lives ; to touch we are afraid.

XLII

TO POLLA

YOU daub your face and think I shall not see
Your wrinkles. You deceive yourself, not me.
A small defect is nothing when revealed ;
But greater seems the blemish ill concealed.

XLIII

TO LAETINUS

YOU seem a youth to look upon.
You dyed your hair—and lo,
The locks once whiter than a swan
Are blacker than a crow.

Not everyone can you deceive
And, though you hide the grey,
Yet Proserpine will not believe
But snatch the mask away.

XLIV

TO LIGURINUS

At your approach the neighbours flee,
What is the cause that makes them flout you,
And that wherever you may be
A desert seems to spread about you ?

A tigress of her whelps bereft
May fill the bravest heart with terror ;
Untouched the basking snake is left
And handling scorpions is an error ;

But you provide a peril worse—
'Tis this, you overact the poet ;
When you persist in reading verse,
Could any patience undergo it ?

For though I run or stand or sit
With verse my ears are still blockaded ;
Aye, at the baths I must submit,
My privy chambers are invaded,

You stop me on my way to dine,
Then wearied by your droning numbers
My seat at table I resign—
I fall asleep—you break my slumbers.

Observe the evil that you do.
Though good, men hold you as pernicious ;
And thus an upright bore like you
Makes even virtue look suspicious.

XLV

TO THE SAME

Did Phoebus flee Thyestes' feast ?
No faithful record still endures.
But I, his bard, must be released
From yours.

You keep a splendid table—true,
To tempt the jaded appetite,
Yet is the feast in vain—for you
Recite.

Away with fine and dainty fish,
Away be all the mushrooms flung,
You spoil my palate with a dish
Of tongue.

* XLVI

TO CANDIDUS

My attendance as client you claim without end.
I don't come myself, but my freedman I send.
'That's not the same thing'—Nay, it's more, I will swear it.
I can scarcely keep up with your chair; he will bear it,
He will thrust people back if you get in a crush;
My elbows are weak and too well-bred to push.
At your stories in court I find nothing to say;
But he'll shout 'bravo' with a deafening bray.
If a law-suit you have, he will bellow abuse;
My shyness forbids me strong language to use.
You will say—'You, my friend, have an easy task got'—
Not so: I will do all my freedman can not.

* XLVII

'FRESH FROM THE TOWN'

Where drips the Capene gate with drops of rain,
Where Almo cleans the Mother's knife of stain,
Where the Horatian field with crops is green,
Where young Alcides' shrine is crowded seen;
There Bassus in his travelling carriage rode,
Bringing of country crops a mighty load;
Great cabbages, and leeks of either kind,
Coss lettuces and beets you there might find,
Useful to sluggish stomachs, fat field-fares
Strung on a hoop, and with them Gallic hares
And sucking pigs; the very footmen bore
Eggs wrapped in hay, as they ran on before.
'Bassus was coming back to town?'—you say:
No: in the country he was going to stay.

* XLVIII

A POOR INVESTMENT

Friend Olus sold his land, that he might get
The cash to build a dainty maisonette.
The bill came in; and now, as he confesses,
That maisonette is all that he possesses.

XLIX

THE MEAN HOST

YOURSELF you drink a vintage rare
While giving me *vin ordinaire.*
To smell the heel-taps of your wine
Is better far than drinking mine.

* L

TO LIGURINUS

YOU never your friends, sir, to dinner invite
Except when you have some bad verse to recite.
We have scarcely sat down when on our weary ears
Comes the sound of ' Book One,' ere the *hors-d'œuvre* appears.
You read through Book Two while the *entrée* we wait ;
Book Three makes dessert and the savoury late.
Then comes Number Four and at last Number Five :
Even dainties so frequent a surfeit would give.
If you won't to the waste-paper merchant consign
Your poems, in future alone you must dine.

* LI

TO GALLA

WHENE'ER I praise your legs and arms,
  Your eyes and rosy cheeks admire,
You whisper low—' My hidden charms
  A deeper wonder will inspire.'

And yet whenever I suggest
  A bath together, you say no.
Perhaps you fear that when undressed
  Without my clothes *I* shall not do.

* LII

TO TONGILIANUS

YOU purchased a house for two thousand or so ;
A misfortune too frequent at Rome, as we know,
  Saw it burned to the ground in a night.
A subscription was started, and ten thousand pound
You received. Well, I hope that it will not be found
  It was you set the building alight.

LIII

TO CHLOE

You boast a pretty face and arms,
So fair you think that none can flout them,
A pretty foot and other charms,
But, Chloe, I can do without them ;

'Twere empty toil to specify
Each several grace—I wonder whether
I've made it clear to you that I
Could do without you altogether.

* LIV

TO GALLA

You need not consider or make an ado :
I can't pay your price : so of course you'll say no.

* LV

TO GELLIA

When we see you, we think of a perfumer's shop,
Or a cinnamon-jar brimming over the top.
Don't fancy such nonsense attracts men you meet :
My dog, if I scent her, will smell just as sweet.

* LVI

A THIRSTY LAND

At Ravenna a cistern will vineyards outshine,
For water is here far more precious than wine.

LVII

WATER v. *WINE*

Mine host at Ravenna's a rascally cheat ;
I ordered mixed wine and he gave it me neat.

* LVIII

TO BASSUS

The house Faustinus owns near Baiae's coasts
No widowed elms, no close-clipped boxes boasts,
No myrtle groves extending far and wide;
His is the true, the artless countryside.
In every corner sacks of grain recline,
And many a jar smells sweet of ancient wine;
When autumn's gone and winter days begin
The rough-clad pruner brings the last grapes in;
Bulls fiercely roar, as in deep vales they stray,
And steers as yet unhorned pine for the fray;
About the farmyard poultry wander free;
Shrill geese and jewelled peacocks you may see;
There guinea-fowl and speckled partridge stand,
And pheasants from the impious Colchian's land,
And birds that from their redness get their name,
And haughty cocks, each with his Rhodian dame;
From the high cotes resounds a soft lament,
Turtles and ringdoves with the pigeons blent.
Fat piglets give the bailiff's wife no rest,
And tender lambs await their mother's breast;
Young home-born slaves flock round the hearth each night,
And by the household gods the logs burn bright.
No pale-faced servants here as vintners toil,
No wrestling-masters waste the precious oil;
For greedy thrush a crafty snare they set,
Or trap young roe-deer in a hunting-net,
Or catch the fish with line and quivering rod;
Nor do the town-slaves wait the tutor's nod
To get to work, but labouring with good-will
In merry mood the fruitful garden till,
While long-haired boys the bailiff swift obey;
And even eunuchs find that work is play.

His country guests come not with empty hands:
A round of cheese from Sassina's forest lands,
Or yellow honey in the comb safe hid,
Or drowsy dormice, or a bleating kid,
Or gelded capon; and each sturdy maid
In baskets brings the eggs her hens have laid;
When work is done his neighbours come to dine,
All share the meal nor do the slaves repine,
Or grudge the guests their fill: he does not borrow
From to-day's dish to serve a feast to-morrow.

But you, my friend, in your suburban seat
Win but starvation from your garden neat ;
From your high towers you see but laurel leaves,
Nor need your garden god have fear of thieves ;
Your labourers are fed on corn from Rome,
And you import to your gay country home
Greens, apples, poultry, eggs, and wine, and cheese.
Mansions in town, not farms, need things like these.

* LIX

'TIMES ARE CHANGED'

At Bononia a cobbler furnished a show,
At Matina a bleacher : I'm wondering now
At what sort of town we may possibly see
An innkeeper give people circus-games free.

* LX

TO PONTICUS

To-day I dine with you at my own cost,
So why not fare the same, both guest and host ?
You swallow Lucrine oysters large and fat,
I suck a whelk and cut my lips at that.
You're served with mushrooms, I chew fungus still
You have to do with turbot, I with brill.
Plump yellow doves your appetite assuage,
I have a magpie starved within its cage.
I'm by your side and yet I'm far away.
The dole has gone. Let's fare the same, I say.

LXI

TO CINNA

Your impudent demands to mask,
You always say that what you ask
Is—nothing—but, if that be true,
What I refuse is nothing too.

* LXII

TO QUINTUS

For a slave you will pay a cool thousand, or double ;
For a cup forty pounds : to pay gives you no trouble.
King Numa laid down the choice wine that you drink ;
Your furniture cost you ten thousand, I think.
For the price of your carriage a farm you might own ;
Your hackney is worth a fine mansion in town.
You imagine that taste just depends on your purse ;
But the truth is, my friend, it is just the reverse.

LXIII

TO COTILUS

You're quite a pretty spark I heard, for many folk maintain it ;
What is the meaning of the word ? pray, Cotilus, explain it.
' Observe,' you say, ' my curly hair—the style is just invented—
With cinnamon and balsams rare I'm elegantly scented,
I hum the last Egyptian song, the newest dance from Cadiz,
And loll in boudoirs all day long to gossip with the ladies :
My pretty nothings soft and low I whisper with devotion,
My lily hands and gestures show the poetry of motion.
To read and answer little notes make up my daily labours,
In horror of their vulgar coats I always shun my neighbours,
And at the races I can tell the sires of all the winners.'
That all, my friend ? You can't go on ? Then I don't want to see one,
And save in Little Peddington would any choose to be one ?

* LXIV

THE CLUB BORE

The sirens, who on sailors brought
The jocund death themselves had sought,
Their spite Ulysses knew to foil :
He heard, yet robbed them of their spoil.
Great is his fame ; but greater glory
'Twere to escape old John when he begins a story.

* LXV

TO DIADUMENUS

Fruit-laden breath on maiden's lips,
Effluence that from safran drips,
Odour of vines in early May,
Fragrance that comes from new-mown hay.
Earth steaming wet with summer showers,
Nard which from rosy chaplets pours,
Myrtle and amber, eastern scents,
Fires glowing pale with frankincense—
As sweet as all of these your kiss—
So grudge me not my fill of bliss.

* LXVI

ON THE MURDER OF CICERO

The triumvir's sword that Tully robbed of life
Was full as guilty as the Egyptian knife,
For he excelled all pleaders at the bar
As much as laurelled Pompey shone in war ;
And Antony but poor excuse can bring :
He served himself ; Pothinus served his king.

* LXVII

THE LAZY BOATMEN

My lads, you naught of rowing know ;
You're lazy, I'm afraid.
More sluggish than the shallow tide
Where dips your languid blade.

The sun has climbed to heaven's height,
His steeds all panting seem
And now the hour of midday rest
Unyokes the weary team.

You pull along the placid waves ;
But with unstraightened back.
The boat is safe ; you take your ease ;
Your tars not jack but slack.

LXVIII

A WARNING

MATRON, this book for you is writ,
Thus far : you ask about the rest ?
'Tis meant for men like me—its wit
Perhaps is somewhat scantly dressed.

'Tis stripped quite bare to run its race
And cannot wear a modest guise—
The wrestling-ground and bathing-place
Are sights unmeant for matron's eyes.

The rose's scent, the flowing bowl,
Have wrought on my Terpsichore,
Henceforward she doth scorn control
And recks not that her speech is free.

As when Priapus' figure stands
O'er garden-plots his watch to keep,
Prudes veil their face with modest hands
And yet between their fingers peep.

So you had laid aside the book
As dull and wearisome to you ;
But now will take another look
Thereon—and read the volume through.

* LXIX

TO COSCONIUS

IN your poems there's nothing the modest to vex,
Not a line in the lot that makes mention of sex.
For myself, I confess it, my books are too free,
And I praise and I wonder at your purity.
Let ladies of pleasure and naughty young men
And amorous elders delight in my pen :
But the chaste decent verses, which to us you sing,
For vestals and children will be quite the thing.

* LXX

TO SCAEVINUS

THE wife you divorced, who has married her lover,
You're trying again on the sly to recover.
From the fact she's another's fresh charm she derives,
And the danger a zest to adultery gives.

LXXI

Mentula cum doleat puero, tibi, Naeuole, culus,
Non sum diuinus, sed scio quid facias.

LXXII

Vis futui nec uis mecum, Saufeia, lauari.
Nescio quod magnum suspicor esse nefas.
Aut tibi pannosae dependent pectore mammae
Aut sulcos uteri prodere nuda times
Aut infinito lacerum patet inguen hiatu
Aut aliquid cunni prominet ore tui.
Sed nihil est horum, credo, pulcherrima nuda es.
Si uerum est, uitium peius habes : fatua es.

LXXIII

Dormis cum pueris mutuniatis,
Et non stat tibi, Galle, quod stat illis.
Quid uis me, rogo, Phoebe, suspicari ?
Mollem credere te uirum uolebam,
Sed rumor negat esse te cinaedum.

* LXXIV

TO GARGILIANUS

Do you shrink from a barber that you smooth your cheek
With salve, and with plaster a hair-clearance seek ?
Well, how will you manage to pare your long nails ?
With them neither resin nor gypsum avails.
Nay, cease thus your wretched old noddle to shame :
Let girls, if they wish it, indulge in that game.

LXXV

Stare, Luperce, tibi iam pridem mentula desit,
Luctaris demens tu tamen arrigere.
Sed nihil erucae faciunt bulbique salaces
Inproba nec prosunt iam satureia tibi.
Coepisti puras opibus corrumpere buccas :
Sic quoque non uiuit sollicitata Venus.
Mirari satis hoc quisquam uel credere possit,
Quod non stat, magno stare, Luperce, tibi ?

* LXXVI

TO BASSUS

A MAID you scorn, a crone for mistress have,
And court old dames with one foot in the grave.
Yours must indeed an amorous frenzy be.
Hecuba you love, you hate Andromache.

* LXXVII

SUSPICIOUS TASTES

YOU do not like fieldfares, you do not like mullet ;
Neither hare nor roast boar ever passes your gullet.
Sweet cakes and hot rolls to you both are unpleasant ;
You never have partridge, you never have pheasant.
But capers and onions you eat soaked in brine ;
Falernian you shun, but you drink resined wine.
Dry sprats you think tasty and pale salted tunny,
And meat from a ham that's decidedly funny.
There's something suspicious, that's quite understood,
When a man prefers filth and avoids wholesome food.

LXXVIII

MINXISTI currente semel, Pauline, carina.
Meiere uis iterum ? iam Palinurus eris.

* LXXIX

'PERSEVERANTIA VINCIT'

JACK keeps starting new games ere the old ones are over :
I think he must be a most incomplete lover.

* LXXX

TO APICIUS

YOU do not find fault and you do not backbite ;
But there's something about you that is not quite right.

LXXXI

Quid cum femineo tibi, Baetice Galle, barathro ?
Haec debet medios lambere lingua uiros.
Abscisa est quare Samia tibi mentula testa,
Si tibi tam gratus, Baetice, cunnus erat ?
Castrandum caput est : nam sis licet inguine Gallus,
Sacra tamen Cybeles decipis : ore uir es.

* LXXXII

SORDID SPLENDOUR

Whoe'er can endure with Zoilus to dine
At a supper with drabs by the walls might recline,
Or drink, even sober, from Leda's cracked jar,
For it's cleaner than he is and sweeter by far.
He sprawls on a couch which he fills all alone,
And with elbows thrust out takes three places for one,
Propped on purple silk cushions in saffron green coat
With a minion beside him to tickle his throat
Or hand him a toothpick, and lying below
A woman to fan him and cool his hot brow.
A boy with a myrtle branch keeps off the flies,
And a dexterous masseuse her nimble art plies
Rubbing all his limbs over with wide-stretched-out hand,
While a eunuch stands waiting his finger's command,
And holding his drunken lord's person with care
The voided stream guides to the full earthenware.

The great man himself to the crowd at his feet,
Where the lap-dogs are gnawing their goose-liver meat,
Turns and throws bits of ham for his wrestlers to seize
And with turtle-doves' rumps tries his minion to please.
We quaff poor new wine from Liguria's hills
Quickly mellowed by smoke ; for his jesters he fills
A cup of bright crystal or veined alabaster
With Opimian nectar to drink to their master.
Though himself he is drenched in the costliest scent
He feels it no shame in gold shells to present
Us with grease that is used for their hair by poor whores,
And when he's quite drunk, he just lies back and snores ;
While we still at table must even refrain
From toasting each other, and silent remain.
That's the treatment we get at Sir Malchio's feast ;
And we can't pay him back, he is such a foul beast.

* LXXXIII

TO CORDUS

You advise me to write shorter poems, my friend.
' Let Chione show you the trick.'
With her the beginning is also the end.
For myself, I cannot be as quick.

LXXXIV

Quid narrat tua moecha ? non puellam
Dixi, Gongylion. quid ergo ? linguam.

* LXXXV

TO A JEALOUS HUSBAND

What ailed you to cut off the young gallant's nose,
And leave all unscathed the prime source of your woes.

LXXXVI

TO A MATRON

These pages were not meant for you
That was distinctly understood,
Yet you are reading them—I knew
You would.

Dear prude, through many plays you've sat.
Read on, nor fear my coarsest verse ;
The scenes you often chuckle at
Are worse.

* LXXXVII

TO CHIONE

They tell me, dear lady, you've always lived chaste
And your limbs by a lover have ne'er been embraced.
Yet for them at the baths a close cover's supplied :
It's your face, in my judgment, you rather should hide.

LXXXVIII

Sunt gemini fratres, diuersa sed inguina lingunt.
Dicite, dissimiles sunt magis an similes ?

* LXXXIX

TO PHOEBUS

By the look of your face I should say—' Change your diet.'
Some lettuce or mallow will purge you : just try it.

* XC

INCONSTANCY

She will and she will not. I really can't say
'Twixt her will-not and will what she means—Yea or Nay.

* XCI

THE PRIESTS OF CYBELE

A soldier was coming back home to Ravenna
With Achillas, a pretty young runaway, when a
Band of effeminate priests came along
And the soldier joined up with the castrated throng.
The priests asked the boy where in bed the pair lay ;
For they thought that on him a foul trick they would play.
But he saw their intention and cunningly lied—
' My place,' he declared, ' is the outermost side.'
After supper the priests, when the two were asleep,
Took a knife and in silence towards them did creep,
And proceeded the outermost partner to geld
While the boy his safe place on the inner side held.
We have seen how a stag saved the maiden of old :
But here for a stag we a phallus behold.

XCII

Ut patiar moechum rogat uxor, Galle, sed unum.
Huic ego non oculos eruo, Galle, duos ?

* XCIII

TO VETUSTILLA

Of consuls you have seen quite fifteen score,
Of hairs you've three, of teeth you've only four,
Grasshopper's breast, ant's legs and colour pale,
Forehead more wrinkled than a woman's veil.
Your breasts hang loose as spiders' webs, the while
Your mouth gapes open like a crocodile.
Ravenna's frogs and gnats may be no joke
But they are more agreeable than your croak.
An owl in daylight can see just as well,
A he-goat has a more attractive smell.
Your back should to a skinny duck belong,
Your front a Cynic even finds too strong.
The bathman has to put his lantern out
Ere you can join the drabs who roam about
The tombs at night in search of some stray lover.
For you in August winter's still not over,
And even fever cannot now suffice
To warm your limbs and melt your ancient ice.
But yet you yearn for marriage, I am told,
After two hundred trials and are bold
Enough to think a man will feel desire
For your cold ashes and your burnt-out fire.
Bid such a one the solid rock to hoe ;
For how could you your wifely duties do,
When you as ' grandmother ' are now addressed ?
Nay, if you want your shaking limbs caressed,
Go, get a bedstead from the realms beneath
And let your bridegroom be the Lord of Death,
While body-burners tend the new-made bride
And with their torches warm your wrinkled side.

* XCIV

TO RUFUS

You call for a whip, crying out that the hare
  Has been sent up half-raw to the table.
You can't cut its flesh, as you loudly declare,
  But to cut up the cook you'll be able.

XCV

TO NAEVOLUS

You greet no man till first he says 'Good day';
Even a talking crow is more polite;
Why should I yield you this precedence pray;
Are you my better by repute or right?

Two Caesars praised me, and for my renown
A father's due is mine, in spite of fate,
My fame and works are known in every town,
No posthumous reward I need await.

That I was tribune all the world doth know,
You are debarred from sitting with the knights;
You boast a few dependants; many owe,
By Caesar's grace, to me their Roman rights.

And yet you have a claim I freely own
And hold one title I cannot gainsay.
In vice you stand pre-eminent alone;
I yield precedence. Naevolus, Good day!

* XCVI

TO GARGILIUS

Just because you once kissed my dear girl on the sly,
You go bragging that you are her lover.
If you do it, Gargilius, when I am by,
Your boasting will soon be all over.

* XCVII

TO RUFUS

Let Chione not read this book,
Which does her charms attack;
For if I don't misjudge her look,
She'll get her own well back.

XCVIII

Sit culus tibi quam macer, requiris,
Paedicare potes, Sabelle, culo.

XCIX

TO THE COBBLER PARVENU

Nay, why resent the jest I made ?
Your anger pray subdue ;
I only pointed at your trade,
Good cobbler, not at you.

Let not the harmless line I wrote
Your enmity provoke ;
You slit a gladiator's throat—
May I not crack a joke ?

C

A BOON FROM HEAVEN

The rain at midday, when I sent to you,
Must needs have soaked both book and bearer through.
How excellently timed ! The sky no doubt
Sent down its flood to wash my blunders out.

BOOK FOUR

* I

DOMITIAN'S BIRTHDAY

O HAPPY day, more hallowed than the morn
When on consenting Ida Jove was born,
Come oft I pray and Nestor's years outrun,
Matching our Emperor's glory with thy sun.
Long may he Pallas court, in Alba's gold,
Long in proud hand the oak-leaf garland hold,
And even when a hundred years have flown
May the Great Games still see him on the throne.
A wondrous gift, yet owed to earth by fate !
And for a god so high no vows can seem too great.

II

THE HAPPY CHANCE

HORATIUS sat the games to see,
Unseemly black he wore ;
Tho' all were clad in white save he
From churl to senator.

Then fell the snow (for heaven conspired
To set the error right),
Until, more decently attired,
Horatius sat in white.

III

THE SNOWSTORM IN THE CIRCUS

THE silent snow a fleece doth cast
On Caesar's breast and flecks his hair,
He scorns the frost and frozen blast
And humours Jove, half unaware.
Who spurned Bootes and the Bear
With dripping locks, may well defy
Those flakes—the toys his little heir
Has dropped while playing in the sky.

* IV

TO BASSA

STENCH from the pools of marshes newly drained,
Vapours from springs that bubble sulphur-stained,
Reek of a fish-pond old and salt and black,
Of he-goat straining on his partner's back,
Of soldiers' boots, when they have been long worn,
Of Jews who take no food on Sabbath morn,
Of fleeces dipped too much in purple dye,
Of criminals as loud they sob and sigh ;
Leda's foul lamp whose fumes the ceiling soil,
Ointment that's made from lees of Sabine oil,
A fox in flight, a viper in her lair,
All these compared with you are perfumes rare.

V

SUCCESS

WHAT brings you, friend, to Rome ? You so upright
So poor and (worse) sincere in word and heart !
How can you play the pimp or parasite,
Or stoop to act the vile informer's part ?

Or would you join the foul seducer's tribe,
Betray a friend, court passion-freezing hags,
Feign friendship with the great, to get a bribe,
Roar hired applause when Canus' acting flags ?

' A loyal friend am I and worthy trust,'
You say. Poor honest wretch ! no hope is there,
Here such an one shall never earn a crust,
Whilst Philomelus dies a millionaire.

* VI

TO MALISIANUS

A POET at Stella's attempted to gull us
By reading us verse in the style of Tibullus,
The low dirty rogue ; but I'd have you to know
He is not so dirty or roguish as you
Who pretend that your cheeks are with soft blushes laden,
And wish us to fancy that you are a maiden.

* VII

TO HYLLUS

YESTERDAY you gave a kiss,
Now from me you fly ;
Tell me, pray, the cause of this
Wanton cruelty.

' I am growing old,'—you say,
' And must careful be.'
Nay, it was but yesterday
When you kissed me !

VIII

THE DAILY ROUTINE

EXACTING patrons claim the first two hours,
The third doth show the raucous pleader's powers,
The fourth and fifth in business Rome doth spend,
The sixth gives pause, the seventh brings labour's end ;
The eighth to manly sports and baths assign,
And at the ninth take cushioned ease and dine ;
The tenth should be the season for my books,
When by your care, Euphemus, and the cook's,
On food ambrosial god-like Caesar sups
And drains the nectar from but modest cups ;
Then usher in my little jests I pray—
Jove is too busy earlier in the day.

* IX

A DEGENERATE DAUGHTER

DR GOODMAN'S young daughter has taken a lover,
And for his fine eyes thrown her own husband over ;
She's giving him money too. Oh, what a shame !
She does not live up to the family name.

X

TO FAUSTINUS WITH HIS BOOK

THE scroll is new, still rough at either end,
The ink, scarce dry, no careless touch may brook,
Yet haste and bear it to my dearest friend ;
Ere he has seen, none else thereon shall look :

Go armed, my slave. As comrade for the book
Take this large sponge, a fitting gift to send.
A pen might not avail to mend each joke,
But this can do it at a single stroke.

* XI

TO ANTONIUS SATURNINUS, A REVOLTING GOVERNOR

The name of Saturninus you refused,
And in vain pride Antonius only used,
When 'neath the northern Bear you roused such strife,
As he who warred with his Egyptian wife.
Hadst thou forgotten, wretch, thy namesake's fate
Crushed by God's vengeance in the Actian strait,
Or did Rhine promise what the Nile ne'er gave?
Didst think more might was in the Arctic wave?
Antony beneath our swords his lot did rue;
And he a Caesar was compared to you.

* XII

THE UNIVERSAL PROVIDER

At night no man do you refuse,
And what is worse, dear Nancy,
There's nothing you refuse to do,
Whatever be his fancy.

XIII

AN EPITHALAMIUM

Pudens to-day his Claudia doth claim
In love united,
A blessing, Hymen, on the twofold flame
Thy torch hath lighted.
These are as honey poured in rarest wine;
Could aught be meeter?
Not cinnamon with spikenard could combine
In fragrance sweeter.

Beside this tender vine her elm doth tower
His might to give her.
She is the myrtle sweet, the lotus flower,
And he her river.
Fair Concord ever o'er their lives preside
Unviolated ;
Dear Venus bless the bridegroom and the bride
So fitly mated ;
And may the coming years so far and dim
No change discover,
But she be loving still and fair to him,
Her grey-haired lover.

* XIV

TO SILIUS ITALICUS

PRIDE of our Muses, who in deathless strain
Dost prove the tricks of frenzied foemen vain,
And make the wiles of Hannibal to yield
To gallant Scipio on Zama's field,
Prithee, dear Silius, banish for a while
These tasks severe, and on my verses smile.
When mad December with her dice-box rattles,
Forget thy tale of sieges and of battles,
And in these days of mirth and mischief choose
The merry triflings of my sportive Muse.
So gay Catullus once, O noble friend,
To mighty Maro did his ' Sparrow ' send.

XV

TO CAECILIANUS

TEN pounds you asked ; then, failing to persuade me
(Though in a week it was to be repaid me),
You said a guest was due upon the morrow,
And so my silver-plate you tried to borrow.
Are you a fool or I ?—'Twere hardly thrifty
To save the ten and give the worth of fifty !

* XVI

TO GALLUS

To your father's young wife in his lifetime you were
Something more than a stepson, so people aver.
It could not be proved while he lived, it is true,
But now he's departed she still stays with you.
It's a case ; were great Tully alive he could lend you
No aid, nor could Regulus even defend you.
When she chooses your stepmother still to remain
She was never a proper stepmother, that's plain.

* XVII

TO PAULUS

'WRITE a piece to Lycisca,' you bid me, 'that she
May blush with annoyance her portrait to see.'
You're an artful, sly fellow, and that you must own ;
You want by yourself to enjoy her alone.

* XVIII

THE LIQUID DAGGER

O CRUEL fate. Where now is death not found ?
What licence is not yours when waters wound ?
Where the gate drips hard by Vipsania's Hall,
And from the slippery stones the raindrops fall,
On a boy's throat as he passed by beneath
The frozen water fell—and brought him death :
A weighted dagger ; then, its fell task done,
In his warm flesh it melted, and was gone.

* XIX

WITH THE GIFT OF A CLOAK

THIS cloak that on Sequanian looms was born,
A gift right welcome on a winter's morn,
I send you now : in Sparta it is famed,
Though it be rough, and *endromis* is named.
Whether well-oiled you wrestle in the lists,
Or punch the light-stuffed ball with eager fists,

Or in the dust the flying bladder chase,
Or seek to conquer Athas in the race,
'Twill serve to keep the cold from heated limbs
And save you from the rainstorm's sudden whims.
Your Tyrian muslins are but shelter vain ;
Clad in this gift you'll laugh at wind and rain.

XX

OLD AND YOUNG

Caerellia, but a chit, apes womanhood,
Old Gellia affects a skittish mood :
How can one bear with either, and adjust
The divers claims of laughter and disgust ?

XXI

THE TEST OF FACTS

When Segius declaims he knows
That Heaven is void and gods are not,
It is because his record shows
That knaves may have a prosperous lot.

* XXII

THE BATHER

Fair Nelly, just wedded and still a coy bride,
To escape from embraces plunged in the bright tide.
But the treacherous water refused to conceal her,
And the deeper she plunged, the more clear did reveal her.
So shut in clear glass you may count lilies white,
So crystal displays a red rose-bud to sight.
I leaped in behind her, and snatched a sly kiss,
Though the water prevented perfection of bliss.

XXIII

THE MUSE'S PRIZE

MAKE thine award, Thalia, cease
To dally. Canst thou not discern
Who for the epigrams of Greece
The first and second crowns should earn ?
Go to Callimachus and learn
That Brutianus first must be ;
And if from Greece to Rome he turn,
Give thou the second place to me !

XXIV

A USEFUL FRIEND

THEY say your lady friends have no long life,
Lycoris—Let me introduce my wife.

* XXV

A PLEASANT RETREAT

ALTINUM'S shore that can with Baiae vie,
And the green woods that saw young Phaethon die,
And thou fair Sola who didst Faunus wed
And in Euganean waters hast thy bed,
And Aquileia with Timarus blessed
Where Castor's steed the sevenfold stream possessed,
If in old age my choice be given free,
You shall my place of rest, my haven be.

XXVI

THE CLIENT'S FEE

ARE you anxious to hear what I lost in a year
By giving up calling on you ?
'Twas a guinea at most ; pray excuse me, good host,
A second-rate toga costs two.

XXVII

ON A JEALOUS RIVAL

CAESAR, I know you often praise
My books—and will it change your wont
That yonder jealous rascal says
You don't ?

If rumoured words his anger stir,
His envious wrath must rise anew
At boons no other could confer,
Save you.

He gnaws his grimy nails for spite,
Just watch him turning livid green ;
Grant me fresh bounties to excite
His spleen.

* XXVIII

TO CHLOE

YOU give Spanish cloaks to Lupercus as hire,
Their wool dyed in scarlet and purple of Tyre,
And a toga new dipped in Galesus' warm tide,
Sardonyx from India and emeralds beside,
And a hundred new sovereigns fresh from the mint ;
Whatever he asks for you grant without stint.
His skin may be smooth and his cheeks may be fair ;
But your stripling Lupercus will soon strip you bare.

XXIX

TO PUDENS

THEIR wealth has wrought my verses harm,
Their sated reader yawns and dozes ;
'Tis rarity gives books their charm,
Like early fruits or winter roses.

Let mistresses be coy and hard,
And men will spend their all to win them ;
If doors are never shut and barred
They cannot draw young love within them.

A single volume Persius wrote,
But this in every heart enshrined him ;
How many now could read or quote
The epics Marsus left behind him ?

So if you read a book of mine,
Think it my only publication ;
I know more brightly it will shine
In that imagined isolation.

* XXX

A WARNING TO FISHERMEN

Go from our Baian Lake, I bid thee go,
Ere thou the guilt of sacrilege allow.
Holy the fish that swim about this strand ;
They know their Lord, and fawn upon the hand
That is on earth most mighty, and withal
They have their names and answer to his call.
An impious wretch from Africa's dark shore
Was drawing from this deep his prey of yore,
When sudden blindness fell upon his eyes,
Nor could he longer see his watery prize.
So now he holds his cursed hooks in hate,
And as a beggar sits at Baiae's gate.
Revere these dainty fish and with pure heart
Cast them a guileless meal and then depart.

XXXI

THE DIFFICULT RHYME

WRITE you an epigram ? When you suggested it,
Friend, I was flattered that you had requested it.
Is it an honour ? I pledge you my word on it,
If my poor verses a lustre conferred on it,
Gladly I'd mention your name from regard to you,
Had not your mother been cruelly hard to you.
Names so unmetrical, sesquipedalian,
Dry up the source of the fountain Castalian,
Melpomene will not whisper or mutter it,
None of her sisters nor Phoebus can utter it.
Get you another the Muses think better of,
This is a word I can't use the last letter of ;
' Hippodamê,' little grace I can see in it,
Though, to be sure, I might end with the ' e ' in it.

XXXII

ON A BEE IN AMBER

THE bee, as though enshrined in honey clear,
Is seen imprisoned in an amber tear
Of Phaethusa or Lampetie ;
A just reward hast thou, O toiler bee ;
Methinks that gladly thou hast met thy doom,
Content to lie within a golden tomb.

XXXIII

POSTHUMOUS PUBLICATION

PACKED in your desk your finished verses lurk,
Or so you say. Pray, let us read your work.
' My heirs,' you say, ' shall give the world that boon.'
Oh, give those heirs the chance to publish soon !

* XXXIV

TO ATTALUS

YOUR rags are grimy, but they've worn so thin
To call them ' snow-flakes ' were no mortal sin.

* XXXV

A STRANGE SPECTACLE

WE have seen gentle deer charging on head to head,
And meeting together, together fall dead,
While the hounds stood amazed at this new sort of strife,
And the huntsman found nothing to do for his knife.
What frenzy to weaklings such fire could supply ?
In this fashion bulls fight, in this fashion men die.

XXXVI

THE CONTRAST

YOUR locks are raven black, your beard is grey.
Well, wigs are easier to dye they say.

* XXXVII

TO AFER

'ONE thousand pounds Coranus owes to me,
Mancinus two, and Titius owes three,
Albinus owes just twice as much, and then
Sabinus and Serranus each owe ten ;
My flats and farms give thirty thousand clear,
My Parma sheep bring sixty in each year '—
That's how you talk, and every day's the same ;
I know it better than I know my name.
Unpaid I can no more your tales endure ;
They bring a nausea only cash can cure.

XXXVIII

TO GALLA

GALLA, say ' no '—Tease love and you renew it.
But prithee, Galla, do not overdo it.

XXXIX

TO CHARINUS

YOUR masterpieces rich and rare
Are priceless and antique ;
Scopas is represented there,
Your ' Myrons ' are unique ;

Reliefs that Phidias' graver wrought,
Cups by Praxiteles,
' Mentors ' by others vainly sought
Bear company with these.

You do not honour Greece alone
Nor later work disdain ;
Here are the finest ' Gratians ' known,
There gold inlay from Spain.

Heirlooms these bas-reliefs must be,
They show ancestral taste.
How strange—You are a debauchee,
But all your plate is chased !

* XL

TO POSTUMUS

When the wise Senecas adorned our age
And Piso's house with all its lineage,
To those great patrons you I did prefer;
You, a poor knight, to me a consul were.
Full thirty years have passed since that first day
When you and I on the same pallet lay;
And now you're rich, an honoured magistrate,
With brimming purse:—yet still your gifts I wait.
The time has gone another lord to find;
Had Fortune known, she had not been so kind.

XLI

TO A DELICATE POET

'Tis but your throat you guard with wool
Ere you recite your verse.
I pray you be more pitiful,
Our ears will suffer worse.

* XLII

TO FLACCUS

If any one wishes to give me a slave,
I will mention the points I would wish him to have.
First of all, I should like him from Egypt to come,
For he'll be a sly rogue if the Nile is his home.
Let his cheeks too be whiter than snow; in those lands
That colour is rare and its value commands.
Let his eyes vie with stars and his hair wanton free
O'er his shoulders; close-braided locks do not please me.
Let his forehead be low and his nose aquiline,
Let his lips on the roses of Paestum refine.
Let him court me unwilling, refuse me when fain,
And ever more free than his master remain,
For me but a boy, to the world a man grown,
Who as friends neither youths nor yet maidens will own.
'I know him,' you say,—'you need not make this fuss;
The boy that you mean's my Amazonicus.'

XLIII

TO CORACINUS

CALL you by nature vicious? Nay
That hardly needs denying,
For such a thing I dare not say,
Besides, I love not lying.

From Pontia's flagon let me sup
If e'er I thought or said it,
Or even share Metilius' cup,
Although the boldest dread it.

By Cybele's mad retinue,
By every raving minion
In Isis' train, I hold of you
The contrary opinion.

I passed a trifling comment, far
From false or injudicious,
And called you, what you know you are,
Unnaturally vicious.

XLIV

ON THE ERUPTION OF VESUVIUS, A.D. 79

FAIR were thy shading vines and rich to fill
The overflowing wine-press year by year,
Bacchus hath loved thee more than Nysa's hill,
Vesuvius, for his fauns held revel here;
Sweet Venus held no other haunt so dear,
Alcides made thee glorious with his name,
Flame-swept art thou, a waste of ashes drear,
And heaven remorseful hides its face for shame.

XLV

PARTHENIUS MAKES OFFERING TO PHOEBUS ON HIS SON'S FIFTH BIRTHDAY

TAKE my glad offering, Phoebus; for my son
This fragrant censer have I filled to thee,
For now his second lustrum has begun
And many a new Olympiad let him see.

Kind be thy tree-love so thou favour me ;
In stainless glory let thy sister shine ;
Yet brighter may thine ageless beauty be
And Bromius' tresses never vie with thine.

* XLVI

A LAWYER'S BAG

Sabellus looks haughty ; there's reason for pride ;
He's made a good harvest this last Christmastide ;
And he thinks and declares to the junior Bar
That he's the most lucky of pleaders by far.
The reasons that make him so puffed up are these,
I'll give you the whole catalogue, if you please—
To begin with, a half peck of flour and ground rice
And a pound and a half of frankincense and spice,
Lucanian sausage, Falerian ham,
And a pot filled with African figs boiled to jam,
A Syrian flagon of dark syrup wine,
Fat onions and cheeses and snails really fine ;
From a client who lives in Picenum he got
A box with some olives—a very poor lot—
A napkin adorned with a senator's band,
And seven small cups made to fit in a stand
Which a potter had fashioned in Spain far away.
And had done quite a deal of embossing—in clay !
No wonder Sabellus feels self-satisfied ;
He's beaten the record this last Christmastide.

XLVII

ON A PICTURE OF PHAETHON IN ENCAUSTIC COLOURS

Encaustic artist, alter your device ;
'Tis Phaethon, you should not burn him twice.

* XLVIII

TO PAPYLUS

' I'll scream if you touch me '—exclaimed a pert miss,
When her lover attempted an innocent kiss.
But when he gave up and made ready to go,
The damsel cried louder—' I'll scream till you do.'

XLIX

POPULAR TASTE

WHO sneers at epigrams and feigns to scout them,
Believe me, does not know a thing about them.
The real bores are the dreary epic spinners
Who rant of Tereus' or Thyestes' dinners,
Who rave of cunning Daedalus applying
The wings to Icarus to teach him flying,
Or else to show what dullards they esteem us
Bleat endless pastorals on Polyphemus.
My unpretentious Muse is not bombastic,
But deems these robes of Tragedy fantastic.
'Such things,' you say, 'earn all men's commendation,
As works of genius and inspiration.'
Ah, very true—these pompous, classic leaders
Do get the praise—but then I get the readers!

L

COMPARISONS

THAIS, you say that I am old. 'Tis true:
But how could any be too old for you?

LI

TO CAECILIANUS

WHEN poor, a lordly coach and six
Conveyed you everywhere;
Then you became by fortune's tricks
A multi-millionaire.

But though she gave that bulging purse
And blindly bade you thrive,
Your former habits you reverse
And 'can't afford to drive.'

'Tis plain such simple manners earn
Reward and not reproach.
I'll pray the gods in just return
To give you back your coach.

LII

GESTARI iunctis nisi desinis, Hedyle, capris,
Qui modo ficus eras, iam caprificus eris.

LIII

THE BEGGAR

SEE that old knave by Pallas' shrine,
He lurks there when the weather's fine,
Or favours, if it chance to rain,
The doorway of our nearest fane ;
With staff and scrip he lounges there
With ragged beard and matted hair ;
That greasy cloak at night is spread,
The only blanket, on his bed.
He snarls and whines to passers-by
Who fling him scraps for charity.
You say, misled by signs like these,
' Some pupil of Diogenes ' ?
Nay, he is no philosopher,
But less a cynic than a cur.

LIV

TO COLLINUS

THE wreath of honoured oak is on thy brow,
Thine is the noblest prize the Muse can give,
Well was that guerdon merited, but now
If thou be wise, Collinus, learn to live.
Henceforth forget ambition and begin
To live each day as though thou hadst but one ;
For who has ever moved the maids that spin
To toil a moment when their task is done ?
Were Thrasea's courage there, with Crispus' gold
And Melior's lavish hand, 'twere all in vain ;
For Lachesis should never be cajoled,
Thy portion done, to turn the wheel again ;
The thread her sisters wove, doth she unwind.
Three are the Fates, and there should ever be
One merciless, inexorable mind
To spurn thy prayer, though two had pitied thee.

* LV

THE GLORIES OF SPAIN

Lucius, who art the glory of thy time,
And wilt not let the splendours of our clime,
Tagus and ancient Caius, yield in fame
To Arpi's eloquence and ancient name :
Let those who first in Hellas saw the light,
Sing of Mycenae and the Thebans' might,
Of famous Rhodes and Sparta's wrestling-game,
Where wanton Leda stripped nor thought of shame.
But let us Celts, true sons of Spanish soil,
Blush not for her to spend the midnight oil.
And bid our Muses boldly to rehearse
Our country's rugged names in grateful verse.
First, Bilbilis, whose steel doth far outshine
The Chalyb metal and the Noric mine.
Then Platea, which restless Salo rings,
Noisy with iron, and keen temper brings
To her sharp swords ; and Rixamae's fair plains,
Where with the god to guide the gay dance reigns.
Then Carduae, whose revels fill the night,
And Peteris with rosy garlands bright,
And Rigae, where our fathers played of old,
And Silaë so skilled the spear to hold.
Turguntum's lake, Perusia's still mere,
And little Tuetonissa's shallows clear,
The oaks of Buradon, the god's own place,
Which even lazy travellers love to pace,
The fields of Vativesca on the hills
Which Manlius with sturdy bullocks tills.
Perhaps at this some dainty reader smiled,
And said—' My friend, these names are rather wild,'
They may be so indeed, but I aver
That these to your Butonti I prefer.

LVI

TRUE GENEROSITY

You generous ! Some childless crone
  Or dotard you propitiate ;
What meaner knave was ever known ?
  The angler's trick you emulate ;
  When witless creatures take the bait,
Is that a gift ? Then yours may be ;
  The better way to indicate
Your claim is this—to give to me.

* LVII

TO FAUSTINUS

While near the wanton Lucrine I delay
And in warm springs by rocky caverns play,
You dwell, Faustinus, twenty miles from town,
Where once Catillus did his kingdom own.
But now when Leo burns with furious ire
And Baiae glows with more than native fire,
Farewell, ye pleasant shores, ye sacred wells,
Where Nereid with Nymph united dwells.
Surpass our heights in winter, if you will:
But in the summer yield to Tibur's hill.

* LVIII

TO GALLA

It is not your 'man' that you mourn, but your 'spouse';
For the open truth modesty scarcely allows.

* LIX

ON A SNAKE IN AMBER

A viper crept along a poplar bough,
When lo, the amber drops that therefrom flow
With clinging moisture stayed her on her way
And fettered by the gum congealed she lay.
Let Cleopatra boast no more her grave,
When tiny vipers such a burial have.

LX

ON THE TOMB OF CURIATIUS AT TIBUR

Now must we say, if thou be wise
In summer's heat to Ardea turn,
Or seek the plain where Castrum lies
And the hot stars of Leo burn.

He that is laid in yonder grave
Saith, 'Tarry not but get thee gone.'
Here sought he Arno's healing wave,
But found the stream of Acheron?

Yet what shall stay the march of death ?
When he is come and calleth thee,
Sardinia's fever-laden breath
Shall taint the air of Tivoli.

* LXI

TO MANCINUS

Last week you came up with a smile of content,
And whispered—' Two thousand a friend just has sent.'
While three days ago, when we met at the club,
You said, as I happened your mantle to rub,
—' That's a gift from Pompulla ; it cost eighty pound '—
Then displayed a sardonyx with lines all around
And two rings beside, both with green jewels set,
—' These are gifts that from Bassa and Caelia I get.'
And again in the theatre last night you went out
While Pollio was playing, but found time to shout,
—' A friend has bequeathed me three thousand by will—
And to-day there's been two other legacies still.'
What wrong have we done you, who treat you as friend ?
Have pity and make of this boasting an end.
Or if you can't silence your tongue, as I fear,
At least tell us something that's pleasant to hear.

* LXII

A BEAUTY RECIPE

Lycoris to Tibur has taken her flight ;
For she fancies that everything there becomes white.

* LXIII

TO CAERELLIA

Alas, poor mother, as you made your way
Across from Bauli to fair Baiae's bay
A tempest whelmed you 'neath the frenzied sea,
Which lost that day its name for piety.
Fierce Nero bade these waves his mother drown ;
They loathed such guilt, nor feared the tyrant's frown.

* LXIV

COUNTRY IN TOWN

The fields that Julius my namesake know
For owner, though they be but few, I trow,
On the Janiculum more happy rest
Than all the fabled islands of the blest.
Their sheltered acres from the hills rise high,
Whose level summit takes the clearer sky,
And even when thick mists the valley drown
It shines with brightness that is all its own,
While in the night the farmhouse gables seem
To lift to heaven to catch the starry gleam.
On this side, you may see the Seven Hills
And mark the space that our great city fills,
The heights of Tusculum and Alba's home
And all the cool suburban haunts of Rome,
Red Roofs, and old Fidenae, and the trees
Where with a maiden's blood we Anna please.
On that, the Flaminian and Salarian way
Their noiseless stream of travellers display,
Whose distant wheels disturb not your repose,
And though near by the sacred Tiber flows
Beneath the Milvian Bridge, no bargemen's noise
Nor sailors' shout breaks in upon your joys.
Whether 'tis country or a town estate,
Its master most doth grace it, and his gate
Is ever open, generous and free ;
You'ld think it might your own dominion be.
Alcinoüs was not a kinder host,
Molorchus could not readier welcome boast.
Let those who this a tiny cot suppose,
Till all Praeneste with a hundred hoes,
Give to one tenant Setia on the hill,
But let me choose my friend's few acres still.

LXV

A PARADOX

She weeps from but one eye ! How is it done ?
Quite easily. Philaenis has but one.

LXVI

THE COUNTRY LIFE

Linus, the country ever was your home,
How cheap that life, how costly ours in Rome!
You shake the creases of your toga out,
Say once a month. A single suit, no doubt,
Will last ten seasons ere its work be done—
Though at the first 'twas not a costly one;
Your woods provide a boar, your fields a hare!
To meet your simple needs; for richer fare
You beat the copse for thrushes, and of fish
Your river yields you freely many a dish.
No costly wines imported from afar
You ever need to fill your Samian jar;
No slave from dainty Greece doth call you lord,
But home-bred clowns attend your rustic board;
From fire and drought your house and lands are free,
You never lost or risked a ship at sea;
At knuckle-bones you stake a nut or two
But keep the guileful dice-box far from you;
Your mother too, whose passion was to hoard,
Left you a million, yet you can't afford
To spend or give—'Tis gone, so you aver.
Untouched, yet gone? You are a conjurer.

* LXVII

'RICH TO HIMSELF, BUT TO HIS COMRADES POOR'

Gaurus, a poor but ancient friend,
Said to the prætor—'Will you lend
One thousand to me, for my three
Will then a sum sufficient be
That in the circus I may take my seat,
And as a knight our Emperor duly greet.'

To him the prætor answer made—
'I cannot help you, I'm afraid;
For to my jockeys I bestow
More than the sum you say you owe.'
Shame on that thankless purse, I fain would cry;
You give to horses—and to knights deny.

LXVIII

TO SEXTUS

YOURSELF you dine in great magnificence,
And give your guest the worth of twenty pence ;
Say, Sextus, did you ask me here to-night
To jog my envy or my appetite ?

LXIX

A DOUBTFUL VINTAGE

SETINE and Massic at your board abound,
Yet some aver your wine is hardly sound ;
'Twas this relieved you of four wives they say ;
A libel—but I will not dine to-day.

LXX

ON AMMIANUS

HE wishes that his sire were living still,
'Tis strange, but with the truth I do not palter ;
The reason is he read that father's will
And found his only legacy a halter.

LXXI

TO RUFUS

I'VE searched through all the town to find
A maiden of reluctant mind,
And yet in Rome I can't discover
One girl who will refuse a lover.
Is it considered base and low
For any maid to murmur ' no ' ?
Or is it by the law forbid ?
I never met a girl who did.
' And can one find no modest fair ? '
You ask—a thousand anywhere.
' These coyer damsels, what do they ? '
Why, mean the ' yes ' they do not say.

LXXII

PRESENTATION COPIES

You want a copy of my works you say ;
I can't supply it—but the bookshops may.
' What ? waste your coin on trash ? ' you make reply,
' Am I a fool ? ' No, Quintus ; nor am I.

* LXXIII

A NOBLE END

Vestinus was ill and drew near his last breath,
A traveller bound for the waters beneath,
When he prayed the dark sisters to hold back the thread
And grant him a respite ere he should lie dead.
His words moved the Fates, for it was as a friend
He was thinking of others, not of his own end.
He shared out his wealth as in bed he did lie,
And then was content, like an old man, to die.

* LXXIV

A STRANGE SIGHT IN THE CIRCUS

See how the timid deer the strife essay,
What anger stirs them to the deadly fray.
Each doe with brow unhorned her rival wounds ;
If you would save them, sire, set on the hounds.

* LXXV

TO NIGRINA

O blest in soul and in your husband blest,
Of Latin wives the noblest now confessed,
Content to share the wealth your father gave
And grant your spouse his own due part to have.
Let fair Evadne grace her husband's pyre,
Alcestis to immortal fame aspire ;
You have done better, for in life you prove
By certain pledge the sureness of your love.

* LXXVI

A MULTIPLICATION SUM

I ASKED you a loan of one hundred to send,
But you say that you only have fifty to lend.
Well, now in the future I know what to do ;
When I want just a hundred, I'll ask you for two.

LXXVII

ON ZOILUS

CONTENTED with my little store,
I've never asked the gods for more ;
Now, Poverty, retire.
Why have I grown so covetous ?
Because I know that Zoilus
Will hang himself for ire.

* LXXVIII

TO AFER

YOUR sixtieth summer has passed, you old frisker,
And your cheeks are snow-white with a forest of whisker,
But yet you go gadding all over the city,
And at each sedan-chair every morning are witty.
When a tribune appears, you are sure to attend him,
If a consul comes out, then your escort you lend him ;
Ten times to the palace you climb the steep hill,
And your talk is of nothing but chamberlains still.
Young men may behave in this fashion no doubt ;
But there's nothing looks worse than an old gadabout.

* LXXIX

TO MATHO

OF my villa at Tibur you now are possessed,
And reside in the house where you oft were a guest.
You have bought it from me and have paid the cash down :
Well, you're gulled ; what you've bought was already your own.

* LXXX

TO MARON

You're burning with fever, but still you recite ;
If you don't see you're mad, then you're really not right.
If you want to perspire, no more's to be said ;
But a tertian ague should see you in bed.
' It's important,' you say. Nay, in that you're quite wrong ;
It's important in fevers to keep a still tongue.

* LXXXI

' CIRCUMSTANCES ALTER CASES '

Fabulla had read what I wrote long ago,
Complaining that girls don't know when to say ' no.'
So when for her favours I humbly applied,
Once, twice, and three times my request was denied.
Noes should not be final, I freely confess :
There's a time, dear Fabulla, when girls should say ' yes.'

* LXXXII

TO RUFUS

To Venuleius these two books commend,
And beg that he to us his leisure lend
As kindly critic, nor for business care,
And for these trifles his attention spare.
But give them to him midway through the feast,
Not when it starts nor when it just has ceased ;
And if two seem too much, then split the ream ;
The work divided thus will briefer seem.

* LXXXIII

TO NAEVOLUS

Your manners are horrid, when business goes right ;
We are slaves, left ungreeted, mere dogs in your sight.
But when you're in trouble they're quite superfine ;
Then it's ' master,' ' good sir,' ' pray come with me to dine.'
I'm your friend, my dear fellow, and don't wish you ill :
But I hope that you stay in adversity still.

LXXXIV

Non est in populo nec urbe tota
A se Thaida qui probet fututam,
Cum multi cupiant rogentque multi.
Tam casta est, rogo, Thais ? immo fellat.

* LXXXV

TO PONTICUS

Your guests' cups are glass, but your own's alabaster,
And so we can't see what wine's served to the master.

* LXXXVI

TO HIS BOOK

If you desire to please an Attic taste,
I warn you to Apollinaris haste,
And try to win him, for you will not find
A man more learned or a man more kind.
If he shall take you to his heart and lips,
You need not fear base jealousy's eclipse,
Nor will you serve, like a condemned man's sheet,
To wrap up mackerel in every street.
But if he frowns, then you must take your way
And lie exposed on the fishmonger's tray,
That salted herrings in you may be tied,
And children scrawl upon your other side.

* LXXXVII

TO FABULLUS

Your Bassa continually has by her seat
A baby ; she calls it her popsy and sweet.
And yet she's not partial to children I find ;
The reason ? Poor Bassa is troubled with wind.

* LXXXVIII

QUID PRO QUO

SATURN'S feast is past and gone,
And of gifts from you not one ;
Not an ounce of silver-plate,
Nor a napkin, brought of late
By a disappointed friend,
For my present did you send.
Not a jar with fish-sauce red,
Into which a tunny bled ;
No dry olives in a pottle,
From Picenum, nor a bottle
Of small Syrian figs to be
Sign that you remembered me.
Other people you may cheat,
Smiling at them when you meet ;
But you won't gull me again,
For your trickery is plain.

LXXXIX

FINIS

HOLD, little book, enough, enough !
Here is the end of the scroll and thee ;
Stay thy course ere the path grow rough,
Keep thy bounds for thou art not free,
Many thy sheets, though one should be
Ample space for thy sorry stuff.
Hold, little book, enough, enough !
Here is the end of the scroll and thee.
Wearied readers are harsh and gruff,
Now are they tired of thee and me ;
Soon thou shalt meet a rude rebuff,
List to the worn-out scrivener's plea ;
' Hold, little book, enough, enough ! '

BOOK FIVE

* I

TO DOMITIAN

WHETHER on Alba's hills, great sire, thou be,
And hence Diana, thence fair Thetis, see ;
Or where near Rome the Ocean's levels sleep,
The fateful sisters do thy answers keep ;
Whether green Circë, the sun's fairest child,
Or great Aeneas' nurse holds thee beguiled,
Or gleaming Anxur with health-giving stream—
I send this book to thee, whose life we deem
By grateful Jove is guarded to the end,
Our country's saviour, helper, keeper, friend.
Receive it, sire ; then I'll be satisfied
And think you read it, in my Gallic pride.

II

THE VIRTUOUS PRINCE

BOYS, matrons, gentle maids, for you
  This modest little book is fit ;
My earlier pages search anew,
  Ye that rejoice in wanton wit,
  But this for Caesar's eye was writ,
And dare not face a sovereign's frown ;
  He shall not blush reciting it
Before the maid of Cecrops' Town.

III

A NEARER GOD

AFAR from Ister's subject tide
  That laves his Dacian home,
The envoy Degis dwells beside
  The royal stream of Rome ;

The guardian of the world he saw,
  Then turned he wondering,
Inspired with joy and raptured awe,
  And hailed his absent king—

'Brother, the fates have favoured me,
  Born 'neath a happy star ;
For close at hand the God I see
  You worship from afar.'

IV

THE DISGUISE

The fumes of over-frequent cups to hide
With scented bay her wine is qualified,
For simple water suits not Myrtale ;
But when full veins and staggering gait you see,
You need not say, by outward signs misled,
' She looks on Bacchus' wine when it is red.'
'Tis just as true and more polite to say,
' Our lady friend doth love Apollo's bay.'

V

TO SEXTUS, KEEPER OF THE PALATINE LIBRARY

'Tis yours to worship at Minerva's shrine,
And yours to share a Caesar's thought divine,
To read his secret soul and watch the birth
Of cares that move the guardian of the earth.
I pray you find a corner for my work,
Where Pedo, Marsus, and Catullus lurk ;
No book, save it be Virgil's, dares to stand
Beside the epic of the Master hand.

VI

THE AUTHOR'S PETITION

One easy favour grant, ye heavenly nine,
Say to Parthenius—is he not your friend ?—
' Thine be long life with happy age, and thine,
While Caesar still doth reign, a happy end ;
And thou shalt live by envy unmaligned ;
Right soon thy babe shall know his father's worth,
If for this modest book a place thou find
Within the holiest chamber on the earth.
Thou know'st when, 'mid the labours of a throne
Our Jove doth pause to rest him of his task,
And beams with kindly glances all his own
To grant the boons that lowly suppliants ask.

Fear not this little client to protect ;
  Who comes in cedar and in purple dressed
In seemly wise, with ebon bosses decked,
  Shall never make an insolent request.
Hold back the purple book and make no sign
  That thou hast aught to proffer or submit.'
But if I know your lord, ye heavenly nine,
  He needs no prompting, but shall ask for it.

VII

THE NEW ROME

The Phoenix from the flaming pyre
  Renewed to life appears,
Sprung from the ashes of a sire
  Who lived a thousand years.

Reflecting Caesar's grace to-day,
  To youth and life reborn,
Our Rome renewed doth put away
  Her aspect old and worn.

O God of fire, thy wrongs forget,
  Thine ancient wrath eschew,
The folk of Mars are we, and yet
  Sweet Venus' children too.

Spare us, our father, so may she
  Forgive the Lemnian bond,
Content henceforth to dwell with thee
  A loyal spouse and fond.

* VIII

AN UNPLEASANT SURPRISE

Our master's edict and divine command,
Whereby the theatre-seats in order stand
And his due place is given to each knight,
Phasis was praising clad in purple bright.
With swelling pride he puffed and loudly said—
' Now to us knights our proper honour's paid.
At length to sit at ease we are allowed,
Not soiled nor elbowed by the greasy crowd.'

He would perhaps have made a long oration,
Elated by his novel situation ;
But Lëitus his periods put to rout,
And to his purple mantle said—' Get out.'

IX

THE MASTER-PHYSICIAN

I WAS out of sorts—not like to die—
  Till swift to my bedside flew
Symmachus, fever's best ally,
  And a hundred pupils too ;
A hundred hands with the north-wind chill
  Pawed me, until I vow
That, though till he came I was not ill,
  I shiver with ague now.

X

TO REGULUS

' FAME comes not to the living. Strange ! ' you say,
' How few can love the artists of their day ! '
The cause is this, that envy's cross-eyed view
Will always set the old above the new.
Thus haunt we Pompey's ancient porch—and thus
Fools praise the crumbled fanes of Catulus.
So Virgil's Rome pored still o'er Ennius' page,
And Homer lived unhonoured of his age ;
Few were his peers to laud Menander's plays ;
Who save Corinna knew her Ovid's lays ?
Yet soft, my books, no haste, nor hurry fate ;
If fame must wait on death, then let it wait.

XI

TO THE POET STELLA

THAT diamond, emerald, and sard
  Adorn my Stella's hand,
That jaspers bright should deck the bard
  I well can understand.

For as he set a lovely lay
With jewels bright and rare,
A few escaped, and these are they
That now his hand doth wear.

XII

TO THE SAME

Though Masclion lifts a monstrous tree
And struts about quite gaily,
'Tis nothing to the feat I see
My Stella doing daily.

Can Ninus lift six boys or eight
When all his might he uses ?
Why, Stella's finger bears the weight
Of Pallas and the Muses !

XIII

TO CALLISTRATUS

Though I am poor and always have been so,
A Knight am I and honour can I claim.
Men say, ' 'Tis Martial ' wheresoever I go,
Few, after death, have won so great a name.
Upon your pillared palace hangs your fame.
Your coffers—since your master made you free—
Have bulged with growing wealth ; you hold in fee
Half Egypt, own vast flocks in Gaul afar.
Yet what I am that you can never be,
While any clown might well be what you are.

* XIV

A THEATRE INCIDENT

Nanneius was wont in the days long ago
To capture a place in the very front row ;
But now they won't let him, and so yesterday
When he'd moved once or twice, he devised a new way.

He covered his face with his cloak, save one eye
Wherewith he contrived at the players to spy ;
And wishing to make the best of a bad job
Crouched down 'twixt the seats just behind Hob and Nob.
Ejected from here, to the end of a seat
That faced on the gangway, he beat a retreat,
Half-standing, half-squatting, with infinite labour
To cheat both Lëitus and his next-door neighbour.

XV

THE AUTHOR'S REWARD

'Tis my fifth book of merry verse,
  Yet no man has protested,
Or said he is one whit the worse,
  So gently I have jested.

But many a reader finds his name
  Is honoured in my pages,
And these rejoice to know their fame
  Will last throughout the ages.

' Such tributes all are profitless,
  For no one will requite them '—
They bring no money, I confess,
  And yet I love to write them.

XVI

A FRIENDLY HINT

You understand the quips, the gay retort,
And I pervert my Muse to make you sport,
  But when you read and quote my verses, pray
  Think of the wealth that might be mine to-day,
Had I but sold my tongue to plead in court ;
What client's fees, what gifts I might extort,
What casks of wine from many a foreign port ;
  But this I lost to frolic in a way
    You understand.

I jest for no reward ; must I exhort
You further ? Well, was fame the only sort
  Of fee that singers won in Maro's day ?
  ' We love your verse and give you praise,' you say.
That all ? Then I must plead, unless—in short
    You understand ?

XVII

A MÉSALLIANCE

She said her traditions had taught her
That she as a nobleman's daughter
  Couldn't marry a Knight,
  Tho' a Baron she might,
And then she eloped with a porter.

XVIII

TO QUINTIANUS

'Tis the season when we send
Little gifts from friend to friend,
Tablets, kerchiefs without end,
  Slender spoons ;
Tapers too are popular,
And from Syrian lands afar,
You may get a narrow jar
  Full of prunes.

Do I seem to you unkind ?
Do I show a stingy mind
If my offering is confined
  To my book ?
Nay, let others calculate ;
'Tis an artifice I hate
When a present is a bait
  On a hook ?

When the char with greedy eye
Sees the lure go floating by,
He is taken by the fly,
  And it's plain
If I do not give at all
To the rich, my purse is small,
So 'tis truly liberal
  To abstain.

* XIX

TO DOMITIAN

If we may trust the truth, this age of thine,
Great sire, in fame doth all the past outshine.
When could we look on triumphs better gained ?
When have the gods more duly thanks obtained ?

Beneath what chief was Rome so fair to see ?
Under what prince enjoyed such liberty ?
One fault there is and grievous, though but one ;
A poor man gets no thanks for service done.
Who gives his wealth to old and loyal friends ?
Who, when you've made him knight, his escort lends ?
At Saturn's feast to give some silver spoons
Or yellow toga worth a few half-crowns
Our millionaires to-day most generous think,
And never let us hear the sovereigns chink.
Be thou, great sire, my friend and take their place :
No virtue more thy majesty could grace.
Methinks you smile and say with wrinkled nose—
' For his own profit he advice bestows.'

XX

TO JULIUS MARTIALIS

If I might spend
My hours with you, dear friend,
Care-free, at ease
To do what I should please,
And could dispose
My leisure as I chose,
The pomp and state
Of mansions of the great
Should we disown,
And law-courts' dreary drone,
All wordy strife,
And pride and show of life.
To drive or walk,
To bathe, enjoy a talk,
Toy with a book
Within some shady nook
Or portico
Where purling waters flow,
These should comprise
Our tasks if we were wise.
To you and me
Life is not full ; we see
The good days fly
And, ah, how grievously
Their sum doth mount,
Set all to our account ;
Why dally we
Who know what life should be ?

XXI

PELMANISM

No name of old could he recall,
  But always mixed them thus,
A Mr. Gross was Mr. Small,
  And Quintus Decimus ;

But now his greetings are correct,
  Each name he rightly quotes ;
How much can care and toil effect,
  He learned them from his notes !

* XXII

TO PAULUS

If I did not this morning deserve your ' good day,'
May your Esquiline house be still further away.
But I by the Tiburtine column reside,
Where the temple of Flora has Jove by its side,
And thence from Suburra the steep hill I climb,
The path dirty stones and all reeking with grime,
Where it's no easy matter to get through a drove
Of mules pulling hard as the marble they move,
And what is much worse, when at last I have come,
Worn out to your house, all I get's—' Not at home.'
That is all my reward for a walk in the rain,
And it's scarce worth the trouble this journey in vain.
You're so busy yourself your friends on you can't wait :
So you won't be my patron unless you sleep late.

XXIII

THE KNIGHT'S PRIVILEGE

You sat where'er you chose in raiment coarse,
  What time the slumbering law you dared to slight ;
But now our censor doth that law enforce,
  And stern Oceanus maintains the right,
  You flaunt in purple and in scarlet bright.
Can that deceive us ? Nay, the chance is small.
  If clothes could prove the title of a knight,
Cordus had won his spurs before us all.

* XXIV

THE PRIDE OF THE RING

HERMES the Martial darling of our day,
Hermes well-skilled in every kind of fray,
Hermes a fighter-teacher, both in one,
Hermes whom Helius fears and fears alone,
Hermes before whom Advolans falls mute,
Hermes himself his only substitute,
Hermes to whom his frightened pupils bow,
Hermes who wins nor needs to strike a blow,
Hermes from whom the theatre wealth derives,
Hermes the bane of gladiators' wives,
Hermes the joy of lady-connoisseurs,
Hermes whose spear the victory ensures,
Hermes terrific with his drooping crest,
Hermes whose trident lays the foe to rest,
Hermes who does each kind of fighting grace,
Hermes in all unique, the triple ace.

* XXV

THE EQUESTRIAN CENSUS

YOU'VE not got three thousand, my friend, so make haste ;
Lëitus is coming, you've no time to waste.
Up quick, run away : or perhaps some kind friend
To you of his superabundance will lend.
Whom now shall I put on the record of glory,
So that after his death men may still read his story ?
Would not this be true virtue and far better done
Than to make all the theatre with red saffron run.
Or to give the three thousand to some senseless gee
That Scorpus his nose all of gold we may see ?
Dissemblers of friendship ! Your wealth you won't use,
Though you read this and praise it. What glory you lose !

XXVI

CLASSES

' A DANDY patron, quality A1,'
'Tis true I called you so ; 'twas only fun.
But if you think that I insulted you,
Call me ' a seedy client, class B2.'

XXVII

THE INTRUDER

YOUR culture, manners, birth, and wit
Are worthy knighthood, I admit ;
But, seeing you have not our rights,
Why choose the benches of the knights ?
Is it worth while to blench with fear
Whene'er you see the usher near ?

XXVIII

ENVY

WHATEVER you may be or do
Evil he thinks and speaks of you ;
'Twere nothing tho' you soared above
The Curii in filial love ;
Though yours were Nerva's gentle mind,
As Macer's just, as Ruso's kind,
As Junius upright, with the wit
Of Paulus added on to it,
And Regulus' persuasive skill,
His envious fangs would gnaw you still.
Is that the sort of man you call
A common peril to us all ?
Nay, who belittles all men thus
Can only hurt himself, not us.

XXIX

'THE PROOF OF THE PUDDING'

WHENE'ER you send a hare, my friend,
You quote the saw anew,
' Who eats a hare must needs be fair
At least a day or two ' ;
And yet in sooth if that be truth,
Not merely wanton fun,
'Tis very clear that you, my dear,
Have never eaten one.

XXX

TO VARRO WITH HIS BOOK

ALTHOUGH with Sophocles thou share the bays,
Though matchless be thy touch on Roman lyre,
Away with work, nor read Catullus' plays,
Awhile bid trim-tressed Elegy retire ;
I send my verse to cheer thee at the fire
A comrade meet at Saturn's festival,
Unless thou deem the season doth require
But merry games nor any book at all.

* XXXI

THE ACROBATS

SEE how they leap, the acrobatic crowd,
And how the placid bull accepts the load.
One clasps his horns, one on his broad back stands
Brandishing shield and sword with careless hands.
The fierce beast stays unmoved, nor could the plain
Give surer foothold or more firm remain.
The boys have naught to fear : the bull indeed
Himself is more concerned they should succeed.

XXXII

THE SPENDTHRIFT'S ESTATE

HE didn't leave his wife a sou—why not ?
He had but one and that he still has got.

* XXXIII

THE CRITIC

A CERTAIN young lawyer, I hear people say,
Runs down my poor books in the most scornful way.
I don't know the name of this legal top-sawyer,
But when I find out—heaven help you, young lawyer !

XXXIV

FOR EROTION'S GRAVE

THOU Mother dear and thou my Father's shade,
To you I now commit the gentle maid,
  Erotion, my little love, my sweet ;
  Let not her shuddering spirit fear to meet
The ghosts, but soothe her lest she be afraid.
How should a baby heart be undismayed
To pass the lair where Cerberus is laid ?
  The little six-year maiden gently greet.
Dear reverend spirits, give her kindly aid
And let her play in some Elysian glade,
  Lisping my name sometimes—and I entreat
  Lie softly on her, kindly earth ; her feet,
Such tiny feet, on thee were lightly laid.

* XXXV

THE PROUD PORTER

WHEN Lëitus came up to our rich high-born knight,
And said—' Now get out ; to that seat you've no right '—
Euclides in scarlet did loudly declare
That his farms brought him in sixteen hundred a year
At Patrae, and from his Corinthian land
A still larger revenue he could command.
But as he was drawing a long pedigree
From Leda, there fell from his pocket—a key.
It was really most awkward to be so betrayed,
For every one knew now our boasting friend's trade.

XXXVI

INGRATITUDE

I PRAISED him in a book of mine ;
  He feigns he does not know it ;
That ignorance is but the sign
  He means to cheat the poet.

* XXXVII

EROTION

A CHILD more sweet-voiced than a swan full-grown,
Softer than all Galaesus' lamb's-wool down,
More dainty than the shells from Lucrine meres,
More fair than new-cut ivory appears,
Or Red Sea stones, or snow, or lilies white,
Whose locks than Baetic fleeces shine more bright
And could the dormouse and Rhine's knots surpass,
Whose breath than Paestan roses sweeter was,
Or Attic honey, or an amber ball
Snatched from a maiden's hand and warm withal,
Compared with whom a peacock's hues were pale,
Squirrels seemed clumsy, and a phoenix stale—
My little love-bird, my Erotion,
Lies in the pyre still warm ; her life is done ;
Six winters had not passed above her head
When fate relentless struck my playmate dead.

And yet friend Paetus bids me not to grieve—
' My wife,' he cries, ' is buried, but I live.
And she was rich and proud, of lineage brave.
Why weep so sorely for a little slave ? '
And therewithal, to show his heartfelt pain,
He beats his breast and tears his hair again.
How brave is Paetus. He endures his life :
And yet he's got a fortune from his wife.

XXXVIII

A LESSON FROM MYTHOLOGY

YOU claim a knighthood ? True, your purse might bear it,
But then you have a brother who must share it ;
To halve your paltry means were foolish, very,
Who takes two bites at such a paltry cherry ?
One horse for both won't do—the scheme's a mad one.
Plague on your brother ! Had you never had one,
You might be Castor ; Pollux makes the trouble,
For though you count as one, you can't sit double ;
To say ' unus sedemus ' makes one stammer,
It isn't common sense—or even grammar.
Follow the plan of Leda's sons—your brother
Might be a knight one day and you another.

XXXIX

DISAPPOINTED HOPES

Full thirty times this year you've signed a will,
And every time I send you dainties rare
With scented honey fresh from Hybla's hill ;
I can't go on—my purse and feelings spare !
To make so many wills is hardly fair :
Do it for good and all, and then fulfil
The promise of that guileful cough that still
Deludes all hope. Now is my pocket bare,
And common gifts, if oft repeated thus,
Would turn a Dives to a Lazarus.

* XL

TO ARTEMIDORUS

Minerva's the goddess of painters, but yet
On limning Queen Venus your fancy is set.
Minerva and Venus are rivals, men tell ;
So be not surprised if your picture don't sell.

* XLI

TO DIDYMUS

The softest of eunuch's more manly than you,
Or Atys himself whom the castrated crew
Proclaim at Celaenae as lord of their rout
While they worship the Mother with maddening shout :
And yet of the seats in the theatre you prate,
Of edicts and stripes, Ides and clasps, and estate ;
And point at us poor men the finger of scorn
Which with pumice-stone rubbings you love to adorn.
It may be perhaps you can sit as a knight ;
But to sit with the husbands you've surely no right.

XLII

TRUE WEALTH

Some thief may steal your wealth away,
Although by massive walls surrounded ;
Or ruthless fire in ashes lay
The ancient home your fathers founded ;

A debtor may withhold your dues,
Deny perhaps a debt is owing,
Or sullen ploughlands may refuse
To yield a harvest to your sowing.

A cunning trollop of the town
May make your agent rob his master,
Or waters of the ocean drown
Your goods and ship in one disaster.

But give to friends whate'er you may,
'Tis safe from fortune's worst endeavour:
The riches that you give away,
These only shall be yours for ever.

* XLIII

THE CHANGE

Moll's teeth are black, while Susan's white have grown.
The reason. Sue's are bought, but Moll's her own.

XLIV

THE PARASITE

Dento, what means this sudden change?
Four times of late—'tis passing strange—
You have refused to dine; to-day
I followed and you rushed away
From me whom once you tried to meet
In bath, in theatre, or street.
The reason I can well divine,
You've found a richer board than mine,
And dogs like you will always creep
Towards the fattest midden heap;
But soon your host, beyond a doubt,
Will find you—aye and kick you out:
Then you will fawn in currish wise
For scraps of what you now despise.

XLV

TO BASSA

You say that you are fair, of spotless fame:
Bassa, to state is not to prove a claim.

* XLVI

TO DIADUMENUS

I DO not care for kisses,
Save when we battle wage ;
For me the greatest bliss is
To see you burn with rage.
I strike, then fondle : so, my dear,
I neither have your love nor fear.

XLVII

SHORT COMMONS

HE never dines at home ? 'tis true no doubt—
Unless he's given a meal he goes without.

* XLVIII

THE VOW

WHAT will Love not compel ! Though Pudens murmured
'No,'
Yet he did not prevent young Encolpos, and so
He cut off his hair, while his master wept sore
And complained, like Apollo and Phaethon of yore ;
Than Hylas more fair or Achilles, when he
Rejoiced from his mother's love-locks to be free ;
In return for the gift may he beardless remain,
And though his hair's short seem a boy once again.

XLIX

TO LABIENUS

YOU sat alone, yet I declare
I thought I saw three people there,
It was your head deceived me quite,
Somehow I could not count it right,
For it was decked on either side
With locks a boy might own with pride,
But there's a vast expanse between
Where not a single hair is seen.

A fine arrangement as you found,
When Caesar's festal gifts went round;
You got three baskets I am told.
Methinks that Geryon of old
Looked just like you—pray do not go
Too near Philippus' portico;
If Hercules should see your head,
All's over, you're as good as dead.

L

THE IMPORTUNATE GUEST

Whene'er I dine at home I know that you
Will surely take offence if not invited;
I verily believe you'd run me through
Did you perceive my kitchen fire was lighted;
Pray let me off this once, this once eschew
Your greed, 'tis truly dreadful when excited;
No longer at my kitchen chimney spy,
But let my cook elude your eagle eye.

* LI

THE SURLY ADVOCATE

That fellow who holds all those books in his hand,
Surrounded by clerks in a chattering band,
Who at every long brief and full note-book looks dully,
A Cato forsooth or a Brutus or Tully;
Though you tortured him hard you could not make him speak,
Or give you 'good morning' in Latin or Greek.
Do you think that with truth I am rather too free?—
Well, let's go and greet him, and then you will see.

LII

SELF-PRAISE

Can I forget your many favours? Nay.
Why don't I mention them? Because you do.
If I begin, some one is sure to say
'Your patron told me all he did for you';
Friend there are tasks cannot be done by two;
Shall this be yours or mine? for I submit
However great a gift, there nothing due
To any giver who shall boast of it.

LIII

TO BASSUS

For Pelops or Andromache
Your style is quite unsuited,
Your ' Colchian Queen ' and ' Niobe '
Are tragedy diluted.

You ought to find Deucalion
A subject sympathetic,
Or is not fire-doomed Phaethon
Still apter—and prophetic ?

LIV

A FEAT OF MEMORY

He spoke your name without his note-book's aid,
The first impromptu speech he ever made !

* LV

A DIALOGUE

Whom dost thou carry, queen of birds ? 'Tis Jove.
Why does he grasp no lightning ? He's in love.
With whom ? A boy. And why with visage meek
Dost thou look back ? Of Ganymede I speak.

LVI

A PRACTICAL EDUCATION

Long have you pondered what employ
Or training you should give your boy ;
Firstly, a cultured education
To-day is reckoned sheer damnation ;
All classic authors are a curse,
Bacon is ruin, Milton worse,
If he loves rhyme, he must forgo it,
Good Lord ! he might become a poet !
If art be naught and money all—
Why, train him for the Music Hall,
Or if he's dull of intellect
Make him a tout or architect.

* LVII

A SLIP OF THE TONGUE

THOUGH I called you ' My lord,' you've no reason for pride :
For so to your slaves I have often replied.

* LVIII

TO POSTUMUS

' TO-MORROW, to-morrow I mean to start living '—
So you say, but to-morrow's some time in arriving.
Where is your ' to-morrow,' where can it be found,
In Armenia or Parthia or hid underground ?
It's as ancient as Priam or Nestor of old.
How much would it fetch if you wanted it sold ?
' To-morrow ' :—nay, do not this moment delay.
The wise man is he who has lived yesterday.

LIX

TO STELLA

DEAR poet friend, desirous to befriend you
It is not gold or silver that I send you,
For costly gifts demand a costly guerdon ;
My pretty gift shall free you from a burden.

* LX

TO A JEALOUS RIVAL

YOU may bark at me always and snarl and attack,
But I mean to deny you the fame that you lack ;
And I do not intend that your name should be read
In my books and thereby through the wide world be spread.
Why you should be heard of ? There's no reason why ;
Unknown you have lived and unknown you may die.
One or two men in Rome, or perhaps three or four,
Will play ' dog bite dog,' if it is in their power ;
But I, let me tell you, am not one of these,
And my nails I shall keep off your scabs, if you please.

* LXI

TO MARIANUS

WHO is the young fopling, who is he, I say,
Whom we see with your wife at her side all the day.
Who whispers soft nothings into her warm ear
And presses his elbow so dangerously near,
While on every finger a light ring he shows
And never a hair on his smooth legs allows.
Can't you give me an answer? What's that?—'For my wife
He's agent,'—A trusted one too, on my life.
He looks well the part of an agent, does he:
Aufidius the rake would not more earnest be.
My dear Marianus, we'll see you both soon
On the stage: he'll be clown and you old pantaloon.
'Your wife's business man'—A young fopling like that!
It's your business, my friend, not your wife's, that he's at.

LXII

AN INVITATION

A WELCOME to my garden, if you care
To sit upon the ground, for seats are lacking;
Or bring, good guest, a table and a chair;
These have resigned, they stand awry and cracking;
There is not e'en a cushion-cover there,
The couch has broken ties and rotten sacking.
I bought the gardens—you can beautify them
'Twill cost you less than what I paid to buy them.

LXIII

TO PONTICUS

YOU'RE always saying, 'Marcus, as a friend,
Tell me about my books and how they strike you';
'Quite wonderful, unique—I dare contend
That Regulus has written nothing like you.'
'Kind friend,' you say, 'May Jove and Caesar too
Treat you as you deserve!' 'The same to you.'

LXIV

CARPE DIEM

Slave, a full draught of vintage fine,
And bid thy comrade cool the wine,
  Let snow its heat allay ;
Twine rosy wreaths to deck my head,
Nard shall its precious fragrance shed
  To crown my locks to-day ;
For Caesar's tomb that standeth nigh
Doth warn that even gods can die,
  I'll live while yet I may.

* LXV

TO DOMITIAN

The Nemean lion and Arcadian boar,
In spite of Juno, gave the stars of yore
To great Alcides who laid Eryx low,
And forced the Libyan wrestler to bow
Before his might, and slew the woodland pest,
Cacus, of stolen kine by craft possessed.
And yet how small to-day his deeds appear.
Each morn we see more glorious conflicts here.
How many boars by Caesar now are slain
And beasts more fierce than that of Nemea's plain
How soon would Geryon admit defeat
If he our famous champion should meet !
And how could Hydra with each head renewed
For all her fury face the Nile's fierce brood !
He by his valour swiftly rose to heaven :
To thee, great Emperor, may it late be given.

* LXVI

TO PONTILIANUS

Though I often to you a ' Good morning ' have said,
You ne'er answer back, any more than the dead.
The next time 'twill be, if you do not reply,—
' Good-bye, dear departed, for ever good-bye.'

LXVII

A TARDY NEMESIS

When swallows sought a sunnier clime,
One laggard tarried, and the rest
Returned again in summer-time
And found the traitress in her nest ;
So was her guilty deed confessed,
And she was slain, for tardy fate
In her an ancient wrong redressed ;
But Itys was avenged too late.

LXVIII

TO LESBIA

I send you tresses from the North ; behold
How far more lustrous is your braided gold.

* LXIX

THE DEATH OF CICERO

Antony, more guilty than Pothinus' knife,
Whose lists of death weigh less than Tully's life,
Why draw the sword against the mouth of Rome ?
Not Cataline himself to this had come.
To your base soldiers murder was a trade,
And for that tongue a golden fee you paid.
You hushed that sacred voice in senseless hate :
Now the whole world is Cicero's advocate.

* LXX

TO MAXIMUS

Syriscus a full hundred thousand received
From his patron, and though it will scarce be believed,
He managed at taverns to squander the lot
About the four baths, drinking pot after pot.
What a thirst he must have such a fortune to drown,
And to do it too standing without sitting down.

LXXI

A SUMMER HOLIDAY

To Trebula thy footsteps turn,
For here be valleys cool and deep;
Hot though the stars of Cancer burn
Her pleasant fields their verdure keep;

And Aeolus right well doth know
My little farm and country cot,
He sends his gentle breeze to blow
That ardent Leo parch them not.

Come, for the uplands call: with me
Pass the long days of harvest heat;
Compared with these, cool Tivoli
Shall seem a winter's warm retreat.

* LXXII

TO RUFUS

'The mother of Bacchus was Jove'—it were rather
More proper to say—'Semele was his father.'

LXXIII

RETURN FAVOURS

Why don't I send my book to you
Although you often urge me to?
The reason's good, for if I did
You'd send me yours—which God forbid!

LXXIV

ON THE DEATH OF POMPEY AND HIS SONS

Asia has Sextus', Europe Gnaeus' grave,
Their sire doth lie beneath the Libyan wave,
Or haply on her strand, we wot not where:
What marvel every continent should share
Their sundered ashes? One could not embrace
The mighty ruin of that mighty race.

LXXV

A NOVEL UNION

SINCE legal penalties you held in awe
You married Laelia ; she's your wife-in-law !

LXXVI

THE MITHRIDATIC CURE

BY drinking poison daily, soon
Did Pontus' King become immune,
So, judging by your daily dinner,
You'll soon be hunger-proof, my Cinna.

* LXXVII

TO MARULLUS

A WIT once remarked—' When his patron is near,
You'ld think that Marullus had oil in his ear.'

LXXVIII

A COUNTRY MENU

TORANIUS come and dine (or fast) with me,
If you should find your lonely table bore you ;
Have you a jaded palate ? there shall be
No lack of leeks or lettuce to restore you ;
Sliced tunny with its egg—fresh broccoli
On a black plate my slave shall set before you,
This from my garden cool—but touch it not
With careless fingers, 'twill be piping hot.

A sausage on polenta snowy white,
Plump lentils duly flanked with streaky bacon ;
Then if dessert can stir your appetite,
Raisins and Syrian pears shall next be taken,
Chestnuts from learned Naples, cooked aright
In slowest heat their savour to awaken,
And from my humble wine-jar do not shrink,
The better seems the wine the more you drink.

And then, these dainties done, if Bacchus please
To stir new craving, I can satisfy it
With fine, fat olives from Picenum's trees,
Or lupins, or parched peas. I don't deny it
Is a poor dinner ; yet to lie at ease
Nor need to hear small gossip, or supply it,
Is something gained : and here you need not wear
The jaded diner's artificial air.

I'll read no heavy tome when dinner's done,
Nor strive by any dancer's aid to quell you,
Those Spanish jades are minxes, every one,
Their artful attitudes would but repel you,
But Condylus shall pipe—and there is none
More skilled than he—perhaps I ought to tell you
That you'll sit next the lady you adore.
Whom shall we ask to make a cosy four ?

* LXXIX

TO ZOILUS

From the table eleven times you must get up
And appear in eleven fresh gowns while we sup ;
For you fear, I suppose, that a draught while you sweat
Will give you a cold if your clothes should be wet :
Why do I by your side suffer no such distress ?
Well, it's cooling perhaps to have only one dress.

* LXXX

TO SEVERUS

I beg you give me of your treasure,
Part of an hour when you're at leisure,
And while you read these trifles light
A debit in your ledger write.
' 'Tis hard my holiday to spoil '
Nay, prithee friend, endure the toil.
For if Secundus too will read
This little booklet, then indeed—
—I hope I don't presume too much—
'Twill owe it to your critic touch
That I, like Sisyphus in pain,
Shall not find all my trouble vain,

To you indebted more than me
And free from all anxiety,
When yours and wise Secundus' file
Has chastened its defects of style.

LXXXI

LIKE TO LIKE

Gold only draws to gold, so it is plain,
If you are poor, that poor you will remain.

* LXXXII

TO GAURUS

Why yesterday promise two thousand, my friend,
When to-day you can't even a bare hundred lend ?
' You can, but you won't '—that's the worst cut of all.
You're a paltry curmudgeon ; and damn you withal.

LXXXIII

THE OLD STORY

Follow, and I shall flee,
Fly, I shall follow thee ;
  Such is the bent
Of love's perversity ;
Denial draweth me,
  But not assent.

LXXXIV

TO GALLA

Reluctant urchins leave their play
  Their clamorous pedagogue to face,
And rattling dice-boxes betray
  The fevered gambler's lurking place,
  Haled from his lair in sorry case,
For now the feast its course has run,
  Abject he seeks the aedile's grace,
The Saturnalia are done.

Yes, done, but I have had from you
No little gift my heart to cheer,
You never sent me much, 'tis true ;
But nothing came this barren year ;
Ah well, your feast will soon be here,
March brings my opportunity,
Then I'll return to you, my dear,
The compliment you've paid to me.

BOOK SIX

I

TO JULIUS MARTIALIS

TAKE this my book, dear critic sage,
For if thou purge its faults away,
It scarce shall tremble in the day
When Caesar's hand shall turn its page.

* II

ON DOMITIAN'S REVIVAL OF THE LEX JULIA

ONCE 'twas a sport to break the marriage vow
And gelding was a pastime : not so now.
Both thou forbiddest, Caesar ; and hereby
Hast rid from shame unborn posterity.
No eunuchs, no adulterers, we see
Here, where e'en eunuchs once with wives made free.

* III

ON THE EXPECTED BIRTH OF DOMITIAN'S HEIR

BE born, thou name to Iulus promised long,
Be born, true scion of the heavenly throng ;
With snow-white fingers Julia shall take
The golden fleece and thence thy life-threads make.
But pass the ages ere thy sire resign
The reins and join his elder power with thine.

IV

ON DOMITIAN'S MORAL REFORMS

THOU prince of princes, our most puissant lord,
What triumphs does thy city owe to thee !
Temples new-builded, crumbling fanes restored,
What holy rites, what gorgeous pageantry,
What cities won !—Yet hast thou given to Rome
A greater boon—her purity of home.

V

TO CAECILIANUS

At vast expense I bought my farm and grounds ;
Can you oblige me with a thousand pounds ?
That silence means I may not pay—'tis true,
And that is why I stooped to beg of you.

VI

THE SUPERNUMERARY

In Comedy are actors three, no more,
And though on Paula's stage are gallants four,
She does not violate the rules of Art,
For one of these has not a speaking part.

VII

EASY BONDS

Some thirty days ago not more, we saw
Enacted once again the Julian law
And outward decency restored : since then
Has Telesilla married husbands ten !
This oft-played farce is ' marriage ' ! I confess
A demi-mondaine would offend me less.

VIII

A PRUDENT FATHER

Of praetors two and of tribunes four,
Of pleaders and poets half a score,
All asked for a sage's girl to wife.
He sought to give her an easy life,
So he made a prudent if hasty plan,
And married her off to a broker's man.

* IX

THE SLEEPING SPECTATOR

At the theatre in slumber your eyelids you close
And grumble when Ocean disturbs your repose.

* X

THE GIFT DEFERRED

For some few thousands Jupiter I prayed—
' Who gave me temples, he will give '—he said.
Temples he gave to Jupiter : to me
Naught did he give. I sinned through modesty
And asked too little. Yet my humble screed
With what a gentle visage did he read.
So looked he when he crowns to Dacians sent
Or down the Sacred Way in triumph went.
Tell me, O maid, who dost his secrets know,
How says he ' yes,' when thus he answers ' no ' ?—
Thus I ; and thus, her Gorgon laid aside,
Pallas—' A gift deferred is not denied.'

XI

THE FRIENDLY LEAD

' Is friendship dead ? ' you sigh, ' in days like these
Orestes cannot find a Pylades.'
Think you Orestes lived on daintier fare
Or quaffed a cup his friend might never share ?
Your palate's not more delicate than mine,
Yet I get whelks, you oysters plump and fine.
Coarse robes I wear, you flaunt in rich attire,
Can Gallic fustian love the robes of Tyre ?
Such friendship shows in word and not in deed,
I can't play Pylades without a lead.

XII

BY RIGHT OF PURCHASE

Those purchased tresses which her head adorn
Fabulla swears are hers—is she forsworn ?

XIII

ON A STATUE OF JULIA, NIECE OF DOMITIAN

Hath Pheidias' chisel graved that lovely form ?
Nay, Pallas' art hath wrought it ; she alone
Could make the soulless marble speak and warm
With all the grace of life the cold white stone.

And, see, a gentler hand than Venus' own
Toys with a cestus—Cupid brought it her;
Let Juno, yea, or Venus, beg that zone
To lure the War God or the Thunderer.

XIV

THE SILENT SINGER

You write no tuneful verse. You say you can,
But from the proof your modest pen doth shrink.
You could and will not! Self-denying man!
O Milton, guiltless of your country's ink!

XV

ON AN ANT IN AMBER

The amber dripped from Phaethon's fair tree
And whelmed a petty ant that wandered there,
And, though of little worth in life was she,
Now in her death she is a treasure rare.

* XVI

THE ORCHARD KEEPER

Priapus, who dost these few acres guard,
With phallus and with sickle keeping ward;
Never may hoary thieves these fences break,
But only boys and girls thy apples take.

XVII

ABBREVIATIONS

You're Cinna now, not Cinnamus,
O Barber, you are Barbarous,
In clipping names you err.
Suppose you shared the honoured name
Of Furius, would you do the same,
And crop it down to 'Fur?'

* XVIII

AN EPITAPH

In Spanish soil doth Saloninus rest,
Noblest of souls, a spirit ever blest.
'Twere wrong to grieve : he still is with us here ;
For Priscus lives, to him than life more dear.

XIX

THE ELOQUENT ORATOR

'Tis not a poisoning case obscure,
Nor murder, nor assault ;
Three goats are stolen, and I'm sure
My neighbour is in fault.

The judge has asked for evidence,
'Tis all we're waiting for ;
But counsel paints with eloquence
The Mithradatic war.

He roars of Carthage—perjured land,
And Cannae doth discuss,
And then applauds with voice and hand
The deeds of Marius.

With Sulla's acts he makes us quake,
O'er Mucius he gloats ;
Now, Postumus, for goodness' sake
Say something of the goats.

* XX

PROCRASTINATION

You said to me—' Can I do nothing for you ? '
So I asked for a loan, as a bill had come due.
And now for a week it's been doubt and delay.
Refuse me at once, don't torment me this way.

XXI

IANTHIS AND STELLA

When Venus knit the bond that tied
  Ianthis to her poet,
'No greater gift is mine,' she cried,
  'On Stella I bestow it.'

So spake she for the bride to hear,
  Anon, her craft betraying,
She murmured low in Stella's ear,
  'Thou rogue, beware of straying;

The wanton war-god oft hath known
  The wrath of vengeful Venus,
Before he was my spouse alone
  When rivals came between us.

Now wedded, none disputes with me
  My sway supreme and royal,
And Juno well may wish that she
  Could boast a mate as loyal.'

She ceased and gave the blow unseen,
  From which no hearts recover;
Now smite alike, O gracious queen,
  The lady and her lover.

XXII

RESPECTABILITY

Now, a suspected past to cover,
You make a husband of your lover,
Lest law should visit your transgression;
This is not marriage but confession!

* XXIII

TO LESBIA

You want me, dear lady, to be always ready.
But love, you must know, is a thing most unsteady.
Your words and your gestures invite me to go
To extremities with you. Your face—that says 'No.

* XXIV

THE SATURNALIA

You are indeed a reckless lad,
At Saturn's feast in toga clad!

* XXV

LIVE TO FIGHT ANOTHER DAY

Dear Marullinus, noble sire's true son,
Who 'neath the frozen stars of North hast gone,
Hear me, thy father's friend, as now I pray,
And to thy mindful heart this message lay.
Restrain thy courage, nor with valour rash
Too swift against the foemen's battle dash.
Let madmen fly into the furious strife:
Father and chief alike both need thy life.

XXVI

Periclitatur capite Sotades noster.
Reum putatis esse Sotaden? non est.
Arrigere desit posse Sotades: lingit.

XXVII

TO NEPOS

Nepos, like me you dwell near Flora's shrine
In town; your country house is near to mine,
So well I know you have a daughter who
—All honour to your dame—is just like you;
And yet why save your ancient wines for her?
Hard cash to mellow casks will she prefer;
Reward her love and leave her stores of gold,
And if you will, new wine—it will be old
Before she needs it. May a childless man,
But not a father, love good Caecuban?

XXVIII

ON A BOY'S GRAVE

Beneath a marble, by Flaminius' way
Lies Glaucias, whom Melior made free,
For well he loved him in his little day;
All knew his fame and mourned his fate—for he
Was pure in soul and modest, fair to see,
And rich in every dower of heart and head,
Yet only twelve full summers he had known
And, ere the next was done, the child was dead.
Hast thou a tear to drop above the stone?
Be that the last that ever thou shalt shed.

XXIX

ON THE SAME

No common household serf, no purchased slave,
But worthy Melior's pure love was he,
Long ere he knew the boon his patron gave
In just reward, already he was free,
For who so good and dear, so fair to see,
Dowered with a beauty that a God might wear?
If aught be priceless, short its life must be;
May naught thou lovest be over dear or fair!

XXX

HOPE DEFERRED

'What, fifty pounds!' you said to me,
'Take it of course—a gift you know.'
Ah, tenfold more my debt should be
If deed had followed word—but no,
You waited month on month, and though
At last you gave it me, 'tis sad
That gratitude died long ago,
And you are fifty to the bad.

* XXXI

TO CHARIDEMUS

You know your good lady has got an affair
With a doctor, yet at it you wink.
You won't need a fever to die with that pair :
Toss off what they give you to drink.

* XXXII

OTHO AT BEDRIACUM

She wavered yet, the fury of our fray,
And wanton Otho still could win the day ;
But cursing war with all its price of blood,
He pierced his heart and perished as he stood.
Let Cato's life than Caesar's greater be :
But in their death is Otho first or he ?

* XXXIII

TROP D'AMOUR

Young Nancy was once the most happy of men,
But now he's quite weary of life ;
Thefts, runaway slaves, fires, mourning and death,
And worst thing of all—a fond wife.

XXXIV

A RECKONING OF KISSES

Give me fond kisses. 'Nay, how many more ?'
You ask ? Ah, count the ripples of the seas,
The myriad shells that strew the ocean's shore,
Fare to Hymettus' hill and tell the bees,
What time, unhoped for, Caesar meets her view
The plaudits of all Rome, canst reckon these ?
What Lesbia gave her bard should not appease
My thirst. Who numbers kisses needs but few.

XXXV

ON A LONG-WINDED ORATOR

So loud you clamoured, the reluctant bench
Gave you seven hours to speak—a generous tether—
But still your speech drags on—your throat you drench
With many a tepid draught—bethink you whether
You might not drain the extra clock, and quench
That burning eloquence and thirst together.

XXXVI

Mentula tam magna est, tantus tibi, Papyle, nasus,
Ut possis, quotiens arrigis, olfacere.

XXXVII

Secti podicis usque ad umbilicum
Nullas relliquias habet Charinus,
Et prurit tamen usque ad umbilicum.
O quanta scabie miser laborat!
Culum non habet, est tamen cinaedus.

XXXVIII

ON REGULUS' LITTLE SON

See little Regulus; he claps his hands
To hear his sire, not three years old is he,
Yet quits his mother's lap and proudly stands
To share the loud applause; he loves to see
The bench, the crowding throng, and hails with glee
The pomp of court and lawyers' busy drone.
So high-bred colts will long a race to run,
Bulls lust for battle ere their horns be grown.
Preserve him, heaven, until, his triumphs won,
His father see them, and his mother own
Pride in the sire redoubled in the son.

* XXXIX

A FAMILY MAN

MARULLA has made you the father of seven,
But they are not your children or your neighbour's even.
Conceived in slaves' beds or on mats where she lay,
Their faces your wife's peccadilloes betray.
This curly-haired rascal we see by his look
Is a nigger, the offspring of Santra the cook.
The next, blubber-lipped, with a flat, crushed-in nose,
The wrestler Pannychus' own image shows.
The third is blear-eyed and you know who's his maker
If you've ever beheld blear-eyed Dama the baker.
The fourth is pale-cheeked, with a catamite's face ;
To Lygdus your minion his birth we can trace.
The fifth, with sharp head and two long asses' ears,
Is the son of your fool Cyrta, so it appears.
Last of all the two sisters, one dark-haired, one red,
From your bailiff and Crotus the flautist were bred,
While your Niobid troupe would have been at least ten
Had Coressus and Dindymus only been men.

XL

THE GRAMMAR OF LOVE

As Glycera was perfect, so
  Lycoris is to me,
How can the past be present, tho'
  Their futures may agree ?

' Love,' ' Loved,' ah, Time's omnipotence !
  His grammar rules are crude ;
By merely altering a tense
  He brings a change of mood.

XLI

THE POET WITH A COLD

A WRAP, because his voice is weak,
  About his throat is flung ;
So he admits he cannot speak
  And will not hold his tongue.

* XLII

THE PERFECT BATH

If you never have bathed with Etruscus, my friend,
Then you'll die still unbathed when you come to your end.
No waters are quite so alluring, you'll own :
Not the founts of Aponus to maidens unknown,
Or soft Sinuessa, or Passer's hot stream,
Proud Anxur, or Phoebus, or Baiae supreme.
Nowhere so serene is the light the sun pours,
Nowhere does the day last for so many hours.
Green slabs from Taygetus and African stone
Contend with the marble in Phrygia hewn,
While rich alabaster deliciously warm
Adds its glow to the snake-stone's peculiar charm.
If you like Spartan methods, first try their dry heat,
Then a plunge where the Virgo and Marcia meet ;
For the water's so bright and the stone shines so clear
You would never suspect any water was there.
Here, dash it : wake up : listen : don't shut your eye.
Very well : you will never have bathed when you die.

XLIII

A QUIET RETREAT

'Mid luxury in Baiae's sun you bask,
Fair Naiads call you to their healing pool,
To me my country cot gives all I ask,
No burdensome broad acres there I rule.
Here is my sunshine, here my waters cool,
My priceless luxury—I went in quest
Of pleasure once to waters of renown
What time long travel gave but added zest ;
But now I hate to journey far from town
And only seek for comfort and for rest.

XLIV

TO CALLIODORUS

Coarse jokes you think are Attic salt,
That you are gay and debonair,
That clownish insults must exalt
Your reputation everywhere.

But now for naked truth prepare!
So vile the venom you call wit,
That none your cup will ever share,
If once your lips have poisoned it.

XLV

THE LEOPARD'S SPOTS

Enough, you've had your fling, ye wantons gay,
Get married now as law ordains—but stay—
If Lygdus weds Laetoria, law, methinks,
But turns a single to a married minx.

* XLVI

TO THE BLUE CHARIOTEER

You lash your nags hard; but they know they're the Blues,
And they won't put on pace: 'tis their glory to lose.

XLVII

THE POET'S VOW

Gliding through Stella's house, thy waters lave
Thy lord's fair halls and court, thou nymph divine;
Egeria sent thee forth from Trivia's cave
Perchance, or art thou of the heavenly nine?
This victim here I offer at thy shrine,
Since, sick, thy healing draught I took by stealth;
Take thou my quittance, nymph, and be it mine
Freely to quaff henceforth full draughts of health.

* XLVIII

BOUGHT APPLAUSE

The well-dressed spectators shout loudly 'Bravo'—
It's a debt to your eloquent dinner they owe.

* XLIX

A STATUE OF PRIAPUS

I WAS not from a frail elm hewn,
And this stark column plainly shown
Is of no ordinary timber,
But carved from out a cypress limber
Which dreads not age's slow decay
Nor centuries as they pass away.
Beware then, rascals: if thou wound
The smallest vine in this my ground,
My cypress rod will graft on thee
Figs that as tumours we shall see.

* L

THE ROAD TO WEALTH

LAST year Telesinus possessed one poor gown,
But his comrades as good decent fellows were known.
To-day he consorts with a villainous crew
And his lands, plate, and table are matched by but few.
Honest friends are no use: if you want to be rich,
You must not be afraid, my dear boy, to touch pitch.

LI

A REVENGE

I KNOW the way to get revenge on you
For seldom asking me; next time you do
You'll know my wrath. Yes, you may beg and send
And urge me as you will, but then, my friend—
'What, what?' you gasp with terror nearly dumb,
'What shall I do indeed!' well—*I shall come.*

* LII

THE BOY BARBER

HERE lies Pantagathus in boyhood dead,
His master's grief and sorrow, from whose head
With scissors swift he would the loose hair clip
And pass his razor over cheek and lip.
Though thou lie light, kind Earth, upon him, still
Thou wilt not match the lightness of his skill.

LIII

A BAD DREAM

He bathed and supped with me—how bright he seemed ;
Next morn they found him dead. What fell disease
Slew him so suddenly ? Alas, he dreamed
That by him stood the quack Hermocrates.

* LIV

THINK BIG

If John can't use ' so big ' in either gender,
He scarcely can the simplest *précis* render.
Why's that, you say ? Well, I myself surmise
In either gender John admires size.

* LV

TO A FOP

You have always perfume on,
Cassia or cinnamon,
Taken from a phoenix nest
Or from barbers' vials pressed ;
And at us poor folk you jeer
Who must unperfumed appear.
Well, I'ld rather scentless be
Than be scented lavishly.

LVI

Quod tibi crura rigent saetis et pectora uillis,
  Uerba putas famae te, Charideme, dare ?
Extirpa, mihi crede, pilos de corpore toto
  Teque pilare tuas testificare natis.
' Quae ratio est ? ' inquis. Scis multos dicere multa :
  Fac pedicari te, Charideme, putent.

LVII

ON A BALD MAN WHO PAINTED HIS SCALP

When nature's tresses you would imitate
By smearing unguents on your greasy pate,
At least the barber's toil and shears you save—
A sponge can give a clean and easy shave.

LVIII

TO THE CENTURION PUDENS

Far in the North you fought and loved to see
Gleam bright above your head the frozen wain,
Nor knew how Lethe's waters threatened me
And the dim mists that shroud Elysium's plain ;
Wandered mine eyes to find your face again,
' Pudens ' : my lips, nigh speechless, murmured still.
But now if no black thread for me be spun,
If listening gods mine orisons fulfil,
Soon shall I see you safe, the guerdon won
Of high command worthy your fame and skill.

* LIX

ON BACCARA

Baccara has so many great-coats that he growls
Unless the frost bites and the icy wind howls.
He likes the dark days and the cold and the snow :
Mild weather in winter to him is a blow.
What harm has my cloak, which a light wind can raise
From my shoulders, done to you that winter you praise ?
How much more straightforward and kind it would be
In August to let us your frieze wrappers see !

LX

THE ENVIOUS CRITIC

Me kindly Rome loves, quotes my books, and buys them ;
But till that critic feigning to despise them
Blushed and turned pale, then yawned and looked confounded,
I never felt my fame was surely grounded.

LXI

FAME

Martial : Pompullus' end is gained, he will be read
And over all the world his fame be spread.
Faustinus : The Tow-haired knaves of Germany, say you,
Share such repute—and other rebels too !
Martial : Yet some account him clever you must own.
Faustinus : Fame cannot follow cleverness alone.
The moth and worm love many a learned book
That no one wants to buy except a cook.
For song needs more than cleverness can give
And, save through genius, it shall not live.

LXII

ON FORTUNE-HUNTERS

Now he has lost his only son
And there is no one to protect him ;
Take him a gift, make haste and run,
Now he has lost his only son.

By cruel fate is he undone,
For soon you vultures will detect him,
Now he has lost his only son
And there is no one to protect him.

LXIII

ON THE SAME

He courts you—of the fact you are aware ;
He is a greedy rogue—you know that too ;
And yet, poor fool, you name him as your heir,
Content the rascal should succeed to you !
' He sent fat gifts,' you say : so anglers do ;
But earn they gratitude from silly fish ?
If you would have him mourn with sorrow true,
Then leave him nothing, you will have your wish.

* LXIV

TO AN ENVIOUS DETRACTOR:

A HEXAMETER POEM

You are not of the Fabian sort,
Nor such a one as Curius' lady,
When she her ploughman's luncheon brought,
Gave birth to 'neath an oak-tree shady.
Your mother's trade I will not name,
Your father shaves before a glass,
And though you have a wife, the dame
Addresses you as—'Pretty lass.'

But yet you dare to criticise
My books, and slate them without pity,
Though they find favour in the eyes
Of men of rank in court and city.
Great Silius deems them worth a place,
Upon his bookshelves you will meet them,
And Regulus admires their grace—
In rounded tones will oft repeat them.

Dear Sura too who lives close by
Diana on the Aventine,
And thence the Circus can espy,
Admires them, just because they're mine.
And most of all, our mighty Chief,
On whom the weight of Empire falls,
In these light trifles finds relief
And often for a volume calls.

Yet you forsooth have keener wit
Than in these great ones we shall find.
Your taste—Minerva sharpened it,
And subtle Athens formed your mind.
Why, damn it all, the offal meat
Is far less rank than your behaviour,
Which butchers hawk from street to street
And vex our noses with its savour.

You dare at me to aim that stuff
Which spoils the paper where 'tis written:
Well, if you stir my bile enough
You'll find yourself severely bitten.
My teeth in you will set a mark
That barber's tricks will ne'er erase.
So curb your disagreeable bark
And don't attempt a bear to face.

He may at first quite placid be
And lick your hand in gentle fashion,
But if you hurt him you will see
What bears can do when in a passion.
So do not you the strife begin
Nor yet provoke his foaming jaw.
Bite, if you must, an empty skin
And find some quiet meat to gnaw.

LXV

ON EPIGRAM LXIV

'HEXAMETERS for epigrams'—absurd!
Such breach of rules, you say, is simply awful!
Yet others use that metre—in a word,
'Tis lawful.
But yours are long, you say: That's lawful too:
Many have written so, you can't deter them,
And you can read the distiches if you
Prefer them.
We'll make a bargain—you shall license me
To write long epigrams nor need to clip them,
While, Tucca, on your part you shall be free
To skip them.

* LXVI

THE BOLD AUCTIONEER

OUR friend Gellianus had sent him for sale
A certain young damsel—whereby hangs a tale.
She was one of the sort who Suburra frequent
And bore some plain signs of the life she had spent;
So wishing to show there was not any risk—
For the bidding ran low and was not at all brisk—
He plucked up his courage and kissed the coy dear,
Twice, thrice, and again, just to make matters clear.
And what do you think by his courage he got?
The one bid—five pounds—was withdrawn on the spot.

LXVII

CUR tantum eunuchos habeat tua Caelia, quaeris,
Pannyche? Uolt futui Caelia nec parere.

* LXVIII

THE DEATH OF EUTYCHOS

WEEP for your crime, weep o'er the Lucrine lake,
Ye Naiads, till your cries e'en Thetis wake.
For Eutychos 'neath Baiae's waves you drew
And for my Castricus his comrade slew,
Who was his comfort and his chiefest joy,
Loved by our bard as Virgil loved his boy.

Did the nymph see thee naked in the mere
And give Alcides back his Hylas dear ?
Or does the goddess in thy love delight
And for thy arms neglect Hermaphrodite ?
Whate'er the cause of rape so sudden be,
Let earth, I pray, and wave be kind to thee.

* LXIX

A PROBLEM

I DON'T wonder your Bassa wants water to drink ;
But why should her daughter ? I really can't think.

LXX

HEALTH IS WEALTH

HIS sixtieth harvest-tide is done,
Nay more, yet by his own confession,
Of all his days no single one
Was lost by fever's fell oppression.

At Dason, Alcon, Symmachus,
He points a gay and mocking finger ;
Ah, friend, 'tis different with us,
Though long our life may seem to linger.

Fever and weariness and pain—
Of many days have these bereft us ;
Leave these unreckoned, few remain,
And little of real life is left us.

Aye, we are babes of tender age—
To count by years is idle dreaming—
The Trojan king, the Pylian sage,
Were only old to outward seeming.

The blunderer who deems them so,
Misreckons life and much mistakes it,
He thinks 'tis drawing breath—we know
'Tis health alone that mars or makes it.

* LXXI

THE RETURN

Telethusa knows well how to dance a fandango
When the castanets sound or a soft wanton tango,
A charmer who could have set Pelias on fire
Or tempted King Priam to leave Hector's pyre.
To-day she has got her old man on the rack :
She was sold as a slave, and as mistress bought back.

LXXII

SACRILEGE

Once a Cilician rascal tried
To raid a garden : far and wide
He searched, but nothing he espied
Above the barren sod,
Except the stone Priapus, foe
To thieves, but he was loth to go
All empty-handed thence—and so
He stole the guardian god !

* LXXIII

A STATUE OF PRIAPUS

'Twas no rude ditcher made me with rough knife,
The steward's work am I and true to life.
For Hilarus upon these smiling hills
The richest farm in Caere's village tills.

I seem not made of wood, so clear I'm shown ;
Nor shall my emblem to the fire be thrown.
For look, this cypress phallus deathless stands,
As though it came from Phidias' own hands.
So, neighbours, to Priapus' honour pay,
And from these fourteen acres keep away.

* LXXIV

THE TOOTHLESS GUEST

Though the three hairs he's left make smooth paths
on his pate,
And he takes the best place at the table,
And uses a toothpick ; it's not what he ate.
He's no teeth and to bite is not able.

* LXXV

TO PONTIA

A thrush, and a cake, and a leg of a hare,
You send me, most delicate food you declare.
I won't give them away ; they shall stay on my shelf.
But—I don't think somehow I shall eat them myself.

* LXXVI

ON A ROMAN TOMB IN DACIA

Here Fuscus lies, who did our Emperor guard
And in the Palace keep his civic ward.
Yet this at least is granted him by Fate ;
His tombstone need not fear the foemen's hate.
For now the Dacians to our empire bow
And as their lord the victor's shade allow.

* LXXVII

TO AFER

You're as poor as a church-mouse, as strong as a horse,
As brisk as a prize-fighter full of brute force,
And yet you delight on six shoulders to ride,
In spite of the fact that you're laughed at and guyed

More than you would be if you strolled through the town
Quite stripped to the buff and to all naked shown.
A giant astride of a mule his own size
Would not be a mark for more wondering eyes ;
A mahout on an elephant would not attract
More scornful attention, and that is a fact.
Don't you see how your litter in all our throats sticks ;
Why even your corpse should not be borne by six.

LXXVIII

CURE WORSE THAN DISEASE

One eye was gone and the other dim,
But a notable thirst had he.
' Drink no more wine,' said the leech to him,
' Or blind you will surely be ! '

He smiled and said to his sight, ' Good-bye,'
And he drank both deep and long—
What next ? He poisoned his only eye,
But his thirst is well and strong.

* LXXIX

TO LUPUS

In spite of your luck you seem gloomy of late :
Take care, or Dame Fortune will dub you ' Ingrate.'

LXXX

ROSES IN WINTER

Her winter roses Nile hath sent to thee,
Caesar, in boastful mood and deemed them rare ;
But now her envoy marvelling to see
Thy gate, holds Pharos' garden poor and bare ;
He marked sweet Flora's treasure everywhere
And splendour from the Paestan rosaries ;
Where'er he turned there met his wandering eyes
A street ablaze with wreaths, a flower-clad Rome.
Egypt, thou canst not match our Roman skies,
Send us thy sheaves and take our roses home.

* LXXXI

TO CHARIDEMUS

You must have a grudge against every poor bather
When you plunge in the bath and begin there to lather
Your middle. What's that ? ' You are washing your head.'
We'ld rather it was then your middle instead.

* LXXXII

TO RUFUS

A fellow last week scanned me this way and that,
As though I were a slave or a prize-fighter fat
That he wanted to purchase, and when with his eye
And finger he'd shown me to each passer-by,
He ventured at last to come nearer a bit,
And said : ' Tell me, pray, are you Martial the wit,
With whose funny verses all men are acquainted,
Who are not with Philistine boorishness tainted.'
I bowed and replied with my most civil leer—
' The person you mention you see standing here.'
' Why then,' quoth the stranger, ' that shocking bad gown ? '
' I'm a shocking bad poet,' said I, ' that I own.'
For a bard one such contretemps surely's enough.
So send me, dear friend, a new gown of good stuff.

* LXXXIII

TO DOMITIAN

The debt that Etruscus the elder doth owe
To his son's fond petition all men must allow
Is due, Sire, to thee from them both on this day ;
For the lightning thou sent thou hast bid pass away.
Ah, would that Jove's fires were equally kind ;
Then seldom full use for them all would he find.
From thy bounty, Etruscus, two favours has earned :
With his father to exile he went—and returned.

* LXXXIV

RIGHT JUDGMENT

On eight shoulders Philippus is carried along :
If you think he's all right, you yourself are all wrong.

LXXXV

ON THE DEATH OF RUFUS

The book is done, but dead the dear desire
That you should read it, friend; you are afar.
An evil land seen 'neath a baneful star
Sends but thy dust and ashes to thy sire.

Weep, sad Bononia, orphaned of thy son,
Let all Aemilius' way resound with grief.
How bright that piety, that life how brief,
But five Olympiads passed and all was done!

Rufus, you loved to con my verses gay,
To hold them in your heart in memory,
Take now my sorrowing song and let it be
The incense of a friend from far away.

LXXXVI

THE SICK POET

O Setine vintage, queenly snow,
Ye generous bumpers, tell me—
When shall I drink again with no
Begrudging leech to quell me.

Unworthy of the gift divine
That precious Bacchus offers,
The graceless loon prefers to wine
The wealth of Midas' coffers.

May he that doth your joys withhold
Amass from every quarter
All Libya's corn, all Tagus' gold,
But let him drink hot water!

* LXXXVII

TO DOMITIAN

May thou and God bestow
Whate'er is due to thee.
If aught to me men owe,
Grant, thou and God, my plea.

* LXXXVIII

TO CAECILIANUS

I CHANCED yesterday on my patron to call
And used his bare name without titles at all.
Do you ask what it cost me, this freedom of tongue ?
I was docked of my dole, and I'm half-a-crown wrong.

* LXXXIX

FULL MEASURE

WHEN our friend Squire Allgood had got through a lot
Of liquor last night, he called loud for a pot.
So they brought him a jar which himself he had drained
And alone put away all the wine it contained,
While he then most exactly and quite at his leisure
Repaid to the vessel his debt in full measure.
Do you wonder the jar all his liquor could hold ?
There's no need, my good friend : he drinks neat, I am told.

* XC

TO GELLIA

' I HAVE only one lover '—you loudly persist.
The sin is the worse : you're a rank bigamist.

* XCI

TO ZOILUS

OUR lord's sacred edicts adultery ban.
But *you* need not fear ; for you are not a man.

XCII

THE TOKEN

A SNAKE round Ammianus' cup doth twine,
Wrought there by Myron's art : i'faith, 'tis fit
His cup should bear a serpent as a sign
Of the vile poison that he drinks from it.

* XCIII

A DIFFICULT TASK

THÄIS smells even worse than a fuller's old crock,
When, set in the street, it succumbs to a knock,
A he-goat when rutting, a lion's foul breath,
A skin of a dog done by tanners to death,
A chicken gone rotten while still in the shell,
A jar filled with sauce that has not kept too well.
So wishing somehow to disguise this foul reek,
Whenever she comes to the baths in the week,
She's covered with unguent and vinegared flour
And layers of powder at least three or four.
But spite of these dodges, and do what she will,
The fact is that Thäis of Thäis smells still.

XCIV

ON CALPETIANUS

WHENE'ER he dines he's served on gold in state,
  In town or out, in company, alone,
Aye at an inn! Has he no meaner plate?
  No, he has none; for this is not his own.

BOOK SEVEN

I

ON DOMITIAN'S CUIRASS

THY breastplate, dread as Pallas' own, whereon
The Gorgon dare not gaze, now, Caesar, don!
Seems it but mortal armour? It shall be
A very Aegis when it touches thee.

* II

ON THE SAME

THOU who to Sarmate arrows ne'er wilt yield,
More trusty than the War God's Getic shield,
Woven from countless boars with talons bright
And proof against e'en Meleager's might,
Rejoice, good cuirass, in thy happy part
To guard our god and touch his beating heart.
Go thou unharmed and soon, the triumph won,
Restore our chief the palm-leaved gown to don.

III

THE REASON

YOU ask me why my books were never sent?
For fear you might return the compliment.

IV

THE ESSENTIAL

TO pallid skin his verse is due,
To this alone we owe it;
He thought that interesting hue
Enough to make a poet.

* V

TO DOMITIAN ON THE DANUBE

If for thy people's love thou hast a care,
And wilt a joyful issue grant to prayer,
Then, sire, give back our god: Rome grudges thee
To foreign lands though thou victorious be.
Our foemen have the Lord of Earth in sight,
And in thy face find terror and delight.

* VI

ON THE SAME

Doth Caesar now to Ausonia wend his way
From that far land where northern frosts hold sway?
No token sure have we, but Rumour's voice—
Fain would I think her true—cries loud 'Rejoice.'
Glad faces at the notice-boards are seen
And martial spears are wreathed with garlands green.
Soon Rome thy glorious triumph's tale shall tell,
And hail thee once again 'Invincible.'
But now, that we in joy may more believe,
Come thou thyself the laurel to receive.

* VII

ON THE SAME

E'en though the wintry North and Peucë's ice
And wanton Rhine, his horn now shattered thrice,
And Danube glowing with fierce horse's feet,
Would keep thee, sire, while thou dost bring defeat
Upon their perjured realms, thou canst not stay
Now longer from thy people: hark, they pray
Alone for thy return, whom Lord Supreme
And Father of the World we Romans deem.
In mind and thought we all are there with thee,
And in the circus so thy face we see,
That people know not, when the race is done,
Whether the Sparrow or the Tiger's won.

* VIII

ON THE SAME

Now, now, ye Muses, sport ; for 'tis the time
Our victor god returns from northern clime.
Thou first, December, bade the folk rejoice ;
Soon we may cry—' He comes '—with lifted voice.
Happy thy lot ! We could not let thee go
If January's joys thou didst bestow.
Soon shall wreathed soldiers fling their jests afar,
Walking attendant on thy laurelled car ;
For Triumph loves the merry song and joke,
And even Caesar then will banter brook.

IX

A PROMISING YOUTH

At sixty years of age is he
A man of promise still :
Methinks he needs eternity
That promise to fulfil !

X

THE BUSYBODY

Eros and Linus are debauched, you say.
Their private life is no concern to you ;
If Matho's mistress costs him thousands, pray,
Does that expense deplete your revenue ?
And, seeing you can snore the whole night through,
What matter though Sertorius drink till day ?
Is Lupus deep in debt ? If you refuse
To give or lend to him you will not lose.
Your own concerns that need attending to
You carefully ignore and thrust away—
Your clothes unpaid for still, tho' far from new,
That no one now will trust you for a day ;
Item, your lady is a trifle gay ;
Item, your daughter's dower is overdue ;
So with a dozen points ; but I agree
That your affairs are no concern to me.

* XI

TO PUDENS

You ask me, dear Pudens, to make my corrections
Myself in your copy and cure imperfections.
You're really too kind and too easy to please,
When you want my own hand in such trifles as these.

* XII

TO FAUSTINUS

So may the Emperor read me with calm brow
And to my jests his wonted favour show,
E'en whom I justly hate I ne'er revile,
Nor strive for glory with a scoffing smile.
Yet what avails it? Knaves to me assign
Their own scurrilities and call them mine,
And shrinking cowardly from the honest light
Under my name breathe out their snakish spite.
My jests you know are harmless, that I swear
By Fame's bright spirit, and by the Muses dear
And by thy love, kind reader, who by me
Art judged a god, from cruel envy free.

XIII

A MIRACLE

In Tibur's sunshine she was told
That ivory though stained and old
May win its whiteness back;
Alcides' hills have potent air;
A little while she sojourned there
And now returns jet black.

* XIV

TO AULUS

My girl has just suffered a most cruel blow,
Her favourite plaything she's lost, you must know.
It was not a sparrow like that which of yore
Catullus to Lesbia could not restore.

Nor was it a dove such as Stella to-day
From his darling Ianthis saw stolen away.
My girl is not taken by trifles so vain,
And the loss of a bird would not cause her much pain.
She has lost her pet page-boy who promised to be
In his virile appendage a real prodigy.

* XV

ON A STATUE OF THE BOY ARGYNNUS

Has Hylas fled the fountain's naiad queen,
Or who is this by Ianthis' waters seen ?
Well is it that Alcides' shrine is nigh
And that he can these wanton waves espy.
Serve then thy spring, Argynnus, nor have care
Of amorous nymphs : the god himself beware.

XVI

A LIKELY CUSTOMER

I've not a shilling left ; what can I do
Save sell your presents ? May I sell them you ?

XVII

ON THE LIBRARY OF JULIUS MARTIALIS

Far o'er the town thy window looks,
Fair library, nor hears its din :
Shrine of the graver Muse's books,
Can gay Thalia venture in ?

Upon thy lowest shelf may stand
These seven scrolls of wit and mirth
Purged throughly by the author's hand—
'Tis this alone that gives them worth—

Yet guard them well, be proud in them,
Though small my gift of love may be,
The world shall hail it as the gem
Of Julius' far-famed library.

XVIII

Cum tibi sit facies de qua nec femina possit
Dicere, cum corpus nulla litura notet,
Cur te tam rarus cupiat repetatque fututor
Miraris ? Uitium est non leue, Galla, tibi.
Accessi quotiens ad opus mixtisque mouemur
Inguinibus, cunnus non tacet, ipsa taces.
Di facerent ut tu loquereris et ille taceret :
Offendor cunni garrulitate tui.
Pedere te mallem : namque hoc nec inutile dicit
Symmachus et risum res mouet ista simul.
Quis ridere potest fatui poppysmata cunni ?
Cum sonat hic, cui non mentula mensque cadit ?
Dic aliquid saltem clamosoque obstrepe cunno
Et, si adeo muta es, disce uel inde loqui.

XIX

ON A FRAGMENT OF THE ARGO

Though but a worthless log it seem to be,
Of old through seas, unknown before, it steered;
Unscathed it passed the Clashing Rocks, nor feared
The deadlier perils of the Scythian Sea ;
And now, though Time, the Victor, vanquish thee,
Brave plank, what stately ship is so revered ?

* XX

THE GLUTTON

For vile greedy tricks Santra beats all creation.
When he hears of a dinner, for his invitation
He angles for weeks, and then hurries off straight
To the banqueting hall lest perchance he be late.
To start with he asks—' seven helpings of boar,'
And snatches some oysters to add to his score :
Then seizes the legs and the wings of a hare,
And lyingly shouts—' I have had no field-fare.'
With mouthfuls of cake his soiled napkin he stains
Wherein a small scrap of pomegranate remains,
And raisins and mushrooms, and figs oozing ripe
And a horrible skin from the stuffing of tripe.

When the napkin at last no more fragments can hold
He hides his gnawed bones in his toga's warm fold,
And with them a pigeon devoid of its head,
Nor thinks any harm his hand downward to spread
And gather the pieces the dogs would not eat
And fill up with heel-taps a jar at his feet.
At the end when all's finished up two hundred stairs
With his load on his shoulder he gaily repairs,
And when to his garret he safely has got,
The very next morning—*he sells all the lot.*

* XXI

ON THE ANNIVERSARY OF LUCAN'S BIRTH

This is the day which, proud of that great birth,
Gave Lucan to thee, Polla, and to earth.
Ah, cruel Nero ! murder 'twas most foul.
This crime at least lies heavy on thy soul.

* XXII

ON THE SAME

Smile, all ye Muses, on this sacred morn
When Lucan, bard of Phoebus, erst was born;
Since that great day 'tis only just, I deem,
Baetis should mingle with Castalia's stream.

* XXIII

ON THE SAME

Come, Phoebus, come ; as when thou didst inspire
The second singer of our Roman quire
To thunderous strains of war. What shall I pray
From heaven that may befit this glorious day ?
Only that Polla still her love may show
To his great shade, and he her love may know.

XXIV

THE MISCHIEF-MAKER

THOU would'st embroil me with my Juvenal!
What wilt not dare? A tongue so treacherous
Might sour the love of Pylades to gall,
Or sever Theseus from Pirithous,
Pollux from Castor, rob Amphinomus
Or Agamemnon of a brother's heart;
No fouler thing can be,—I curse thee thus,
Mayst thou continue even what thou art!

* XXV

TO A RIVAL POET

YOUR verses are full of a sugary grace,
As spotless and pure as a well-powdered face,
Not an atom of salt or suspicion of gall,
So how can they but on an audience pall!
Even food does not please if the cooking's too simple,
And cheeks lack in charm when they haven't a dimple.
A child may like apples and figs without savour;
But give me the sort that have got a sharp flavour.

XXVI

TO APOLLINARIS

GO seek my friend and, if his cares permit,
Give him this book whatever be its worth;
Some it must have, for he hath part in it,
And let his taste refine my simpler mirth;
Go then my verse and, if he smile on thee,
Seek that protection I have known of yore;
Such passion for my merry muse hath he
That I myself could hardly love her more.
Needst thou a patron mighty to defend
If spite assail thee? Go and seek my friend.

XXVII

ON A PRESENT OF A WILD BOAR

On Tuscan acorns fed, in monster size
He yields to Meleager's boar alone,
Now pierced by Dexter's glittering spear he lies
In bulk that makes my humble kitchen groan ;
Hearth gods, grow fat, in unctuous vapour bask,
Strip a whole hill for festal logs—but hold !
How vast a mound of spice the cook will ask
And for a crafty sauce good wine and old ;
Return, thou costly brute ; my fire aghast
Shrinks from thy bulk : *'Tis cheaper far to fast.*

XXVIII

TO FUSCUS

Friend may your woods where Dian roves
Grow still more fair for you,
Though oft you lop the leafy groves
May these their grace renew.
Rich olives in Tartessus grow,
Be yours more full and fine ;
And your vast cisterns overflow
With pure and sweetest wine.
Let all admire that silver tongue
That court and forum sways,
And o'er your doors the palm be hung
To tell the victor's praise ;
But let the Saturnalia bring
A little holiday,
Then hear these merry songs I sing
And polish them I pray—
'A parlous task,' you say, 'to tell
Plain truth to any bard ! '
You love to hear the truth so well,
To tell it is not hard.

* XXIX

TO THESTYLUS

Dear Thestylus, Voconius Victor's joy
And pleasant torment, most beloved boy,
I pray that fair without your locks you seem
And that your bard no maid more comely deem.

A little while his learned scrolls lay by
While to your lord I read my poetry.
So great Maecenas, who could Virgil hear,
Let Marsus' dark Melaenis charm his ear.

XXX

THE EXOTIC LOVER

Caelia, you love a Teuton swain,
An Asiatic stirs your pity,
For you swart Indians cross the main,
Copts flock to you from Pharos' city.

A Jew, a Scythian cavalier,
Can please you—but I can't discover
Why you, a Roman, are austere
To none except a Roman lover.

XXXI

COUNTRY PRODUCE!

These cackling fowls and eggs I send you,
These Chian figs grown ripe in tempered heat,
The shaggy kid for which his dam doth bleat,
The cabbage white with rime of frozen dew
That hath not marred the olives' tender hue,
Think you that all are from my country-seat?

Nay, Regulus, you will not understand,
Naught in my starveling field could you descry
Save me; far Umbria doth your need supply
And rich suburban gardens nigh at hand:
What Tusculum doth yield at your demand
I hunt through all the market-place to buy.

* XXXII

TO ATTICUS

Of an eloquent race you're reviving the name,
And let not your house lie forgotten by fame:
Minerva's good votaries ever attend you
And sages delight their wise leisure to lend you.

Other youths with a thick-eared old boxer you see
And a filthy masseur takes his scarcely-earned fee ;
But you don't prepare for your bath with a ball—
Whether bladder or feather or solid withal—
Nor strike with blunt sword at some poor dummy image,
Nor darting with speed snatch the ball from the scrimmage,
Nor yet waste your time at the wrestler's toil
With arms set akimbo all covered with oil.
You go for a run where the clear Virgo flows
Or where Europe's bull in the portico shows.
To trifle with games in a square, I confess,
When one might take a run, is just sheer idleness.

* XXXIII

TO CINNA

YOUR toga is filthy, your shoes white as snow ;
But your toga hangs down so your feet do not show.
Pull it up, silly fellow, and let them appear :
As it is their effect is quite wasted, I fear.

* XXXIV

ON THE BATHS OF CHARINUS

How is it, you ask, that a rascal so low,
As Charinus could yet this one service bestow ?
I'll explain. Was not Nero a monster confessed,
Yet are not his baths still accounted the best ?
At this some base knave with a sly sneering nod
May remark—' To the gifts of our master and god
You prefer something else '—Nay, that is your vile fancy.
I preferred Nero's baths to the baths of a Nancy.

XXXV

INGUINA succinctus nigra tibi seruos aluta
Stat, quotiens calidis tota foueris aquis.
Sed meus, ut de me taceam, Laecania, seruos
Iudaeum nuda sub cute pondus habet,
Sed nudi tecum iuuenesque senesque lauantur.
An sola est serui mentula uera tui ?
Ecquid femineos sequeris, matrona, recessus,
Secretusque tua, cunne, lauaris aqua ?

XXXVI

A REMINDER TO STELLA

What time my rugged cot endured the bane
Of winter's drenching floods, your kindly care
Sent wherewithal the havoc to repair
And so my roof defies the sudden rain.
Think how rude Boreas roars ; the boon is vain
That clothes the farm but leaves the farmer bare.

XXXVII

THE DEATH SIGNAL

You know the dread signal of death I suppose ?
But one whimsical quaestor has lately ordained
A new one, and said if he once blew his nose
It was sentence of death on the culprit arraigned.
Till winter drew on was the custom maintained,
Then the judge caught catarrh from December's chill breath
And his colleagues rushed up and his hands they restrained
Or all the accused had been sentenced to death.

XXXVIII

ON TWO MONSTROSITIES SHOWN IN THE CIRCUS

The Cyclops of old, could he only behold
Polyphemus, would start with surprise,
And Scylla for shame's sake would turn from her namesake
So ghastly their faces and size.
Ah, would it were fated the pair should be mated
Their terror they hardly could smother,
Just think of the sight when each shuddered with fright
And fainted at view of the other !

XXXIX

PRETENCE COMES TRUE

Friend Caelius vowed he would no longer bear
To run and dance attendance everywhere
On Patrons, face their haughtiness and scorn
Or be compelled to greet them every morn.

So to escape these toils he feigned the gout,
But, fearing lest his patron found him out,
With drugs he smeared and bandaged both his feet,
And crawled with dragging footsteps down the street ;
So well he feigned disease, when he had not it,
That now he shams no more ; for he has got it.

* XL

ON THE TOMB OF CLAUDIUS ETRUSCUS AND HIS WIFE

Here lies the sage, long in the palace known,
Who bore the Emperor's favour and his frown
Undaunted. By their children's love at rest
Husband and wife are of one grave possessed.
She died in youth, robbed of her life's spring bloom ;
The father to his ninetieth year did come.
Yet all who see his children's tears believe
That they for one untimely taken grieve.

XLI

THE CITIZEN OF THE WORLD

You boast ' The world's my country ! ' Be it so ;
It takes all sorts to make a world you know !

XLII

TO CASTRICUS

Who can dispute with you the meed
For tuneful verse or noble deed ?
Not I, who readily concede
The palm ;
'Tis ease and quiet I pursue—
' Then why send feeble verses ? ' True,
Yet coals to Newcastle can do
No harm.

XLIII

SHILLY-SHALLY

THE best you can do is to grant my demand,
Your second-best course to refuse it off-hand ;
I welcome assent and denial excuse—
But, Cinna, you neither consent nor refuse.

* XLIV

TO OVIDIUS, WITH A PORTRAIT OF CAESONIUS

HERE in this bust your dear Caesonius lives,
And in the wax his very look survives.
Nero condemned him ; but you boldly dared
To condemn the tyrant and his exile shared.
You would not in the consul's cortège go,
But went, a banished man, to Scylla's flow.
If names I write shall long endurance have
And these my books survive my mortal grave,
Know, future ages and this age to-day,
His care for Seneca you did him repay.

XLV

TO THE SAME

'TIS he, the friend of Seneca, not less
  Beloved than dear Serenus of the sage,
  Whose kindly greetings writ on many a page
Serve still to testify his tenderness.

And you that crossed the wide Sicilian sea
  To follow him and share his exile drear,
  Ovid, we praise you still and hold you dear,
Who scorned a monarch's frenzied tyranny.

The days of old of Pylades may prate
  Who to a wrathful woman's victim clave,
  Thine, Ovid, was the nobler part, to brave—
And all for love—a Nero's cruel hate.

XLVI

TO PRISCUS

Whilst you attempt your present to commend
In verses fit for Homer's approbation,
You suffer agonies, ambitious friend,
And I starvation ;
'Tis Martial suffers while your Muse is mute ;
The rich can wait for verse—on them bestow it :
Hard cash, tho' unaccompanied, would suit
A needy poet.

* XLVII

TO LICINIUS SURA, ON HIS RECOVERY FROM SICKNESS

Sura, 'mid learned men most famed of all,
Whose tongue our ancient grandsires did recall,
Oh by what grace did Fate to us restore
Thy life which near had come to Lethe's shore!
Our fears were past ; at ease we wept and sighed
And in our thoughts at least our friend had died.

But death's dark king that odium could not brave,
And to the fates again their distaff gave.
Thou knowest now what grief thy false death brought
And canst enjoy posthumous fame unsought.
Live as on booty then : pluck joy in haste :
Life thus restored has not one day to waste.

* XLVIII

TO ANNIUS

At three hundred tables your fare might be spread,
But with you we find three hundred waiters instead.
They snatch off the plates and make each course fly fast.
Enough ! I don't care for a walking-repast.

* XLIX

TO SEVERUS

Eggs for your meal and dessert apples, friend,
As gifts from my suburban home I send.

* L

ON A FOUNTAIN

Fountain wherein Ianthis doth delight,
Glory of garden and of mansion bright,
Where youths in marble beauty deck the mead,
And each cool wave reflects a Ganymede,
What does Alcides in yon woodland shrine?
Why holds the god a grot so near to thine?
Does he keep guard against the Naiads, pray,
Lest every Hylas should be stolen away?

LI

TO URBICUS

You want to hear my verse, but not to buy it?
If that's your longing, you can gratify it:
Find Auctus (near Mars' temple is his dwelling,
Perhaps you know the man and need no telling)
In civic as in legal lore a leader,
He is himself my book and no mere reader.
A written scroll could not record it better,
He reels it off, and never drops a letter,
So if he said 'twas his, all would believe him,
But were my fame diminished, that would grieve him.
Call about four, till then he's not at leisure,
And dine *à deux*: he will recite with pleasure;
The while you drink, declaiming endless verse for you;
If you are bored, why then so much the worse for you:
Cry 'Hold—enough,' yet on he still will run with it,
You cannot stop him once he has begun with it.

LII

TO AUCTUS

Friend, it is pleasant that you read
My verse to Celer—if indeed
He cares to hear ;
But since he ruled my native shore
Where none was feared and trusted more,
I shrink in fear ;
No common auditor is he,
And such a critic well may be
A judge severe.

* LIII

TO UMBER

All the presents this year that at Christmas you got
You have sent on to me—and they are a choice lot !
Seven toothpicks, twelve tablets, a napkin, a mug,
A half-peck of beans, and a sponge, and a jug
Of Laletan wine, some dried prunes, and a casket
Of Picenian olives, and figs in a basket.
I think that in all they were worth half a crown ;
Yet it took eight big footmen to carry them down.
You'ld have found it less trouble one page-boy to send
With five pounds of plate as your present, my friend.

LIV

OMENS

Each morn you tell some evil dream you've had
About me, till you drive me nearly mad ;
To charms I have resorted to divine
The omen ; that has used up all my wine,
My salted meal, whole mounds of frankincense,
And half my flocks and herds—a vain expense.
Pigs, fowls, and eggs are gone ; for mercy's sake
Do dream about yourself—or stay awake.

* LV

TO CHRESTUS

THOUGH you send me no presents I'd not care a bit
If it were not that Tom, Dick, and Harry, and Kit
Get plenty. The next time you play dirty tricks,
I'll ask you on some Jewish gentry to fix.

* LVI

TO RABIRIUS, ARCHITECT OF DOMITIAN'S PALACE

To heaven thou must in thought at least have come
Who didst design our Emperor's palace home.
Were Phidian Jove due lodging to receive,
Pisa would beg our God thy aid to give.

LVII

LADY'S FAVOURS

HE was great with the gloves, but the lady he loves
Said boxing must now be deserted ;
A Knight she has made him, and so has displayed him
As Pollux to Castor converted.

* LVIII

TO GALLA

SIX or seven young Nancies already you've wed,
Allured by their beards and their neatly-brushed head.
You test and you try them and find that each one
Falls very much short and is much too soon done.
So you give him the go-by and try a fresh sheet ;
Only there once again disappointment to meet.
You had better endeavour a sage to discover
With rough, shaggy hair, if you want a true lover.
And even with them you may light on a Nan :
It is hard for a lady to find a real man.

* LIX

TO TITUS

WHEN Caecilian dines, a boar's always on view.
It's the one guest he has—and a proper one too.

* LX

TO JUPITER CAPITOLINUS

O SACRED ruler of Tarpeia's hall,
Whom, while our chief is safe, we Thunderer call ;
Let other men to thee petition make
And ask that they thy gifts divine may take ;
But be not wroth with me if naught I crave,
Nor bounty for myself desire to have.
For Caesar all my prayers are made to heaven :
From Caesar all I need is freely given.

* LXI

THE OPEN-AIR MARKET

BOLD hucksters had seized on the roads all about,
The contents of each shop you would see inside out,
Till the Emperor told them to beat a retreat,
And what was an alley made once more a street.
No cups chained to pillars to-day are allowed,
No barbers ply razors unseen in the crowd,
No longer through mud do our magistrates stray,
No longer do cookshops spread out o'er the way
Within doors butcher, barber, cook, vintner remain :
Rome was one big bazaar ; she's herself now again.

LXII

RECLUSIS foribus grandes percidis, Amille,
Et te deprendi, cum facis ista, cupis,
Ne quid liberti narrent seruique paterni
Et niger obliqua garrulitate cliens.
Non pedicari se qui testatur, Amille,
Illud saepe facit quod sine teste facit.

LXIII

ON SILIUS ITALICUS

Con o'er his books that time shall not destroy,
His songs well worthy Rome ; but, as ye read,
Deem not Pieria was his only joy,
That Bacchus' garland was his only meed.
Virgilian fire had touched him not, until
His golden tongue had earned a Tully's fame ;
The forum looks with awe upon him still
And grateful clients still revere his name.
He ruled as consul through the wondrous year,
That year made holy by a world made free ;
These tasks well wrought, the Muses held him dear
And now upon their mountain dwelleth he.

LXIV

TO THE BARBER CINNAMUS

You had won much renown as a barber in town
And then got a knighthood by fraud
Of an amorous lady—the business was shady
And led you to hurry abroad ;
Now your living is gone and the years will drag on,
I pity your idle condition,
You cannot profess to teach grammar—much less
To be an expert rhetorician ;
Philosophical preaching is vain, so is teaching,
No hope at the bar you can harbour,
And the claque is no good—so you can't if you would
Be anything else but a barber.

LXV

THE OBSTINATE LITIGANT

You are weary and wan, yet the lawsuit drags on,
Now its twentieth year is complete.
So you must be a dunce ; it had ended at once
Had you only admitted defeat.

LXVI

A POOR INVESTMENT

In Fabius' will sole legatee,
Why is not Labienus glad?
In courting the testator, he
Had spent far more than Fabius had.

LXVII

Pedicat pueros tribas Philaenis
Et tentigine saeuior mariti
Undenas dolat in die puellas.
Harpasto quoque subligata ludit
Et flauescit haphe, grauesque draucis
Halteras facili rotat lacerto,
Et putri lutulenta de palaestra
Uncti uerbere uapulat magistri:
Nec cenat prius aut recumbit ante
Quam septem uomuit meros deunces;
Ad quos fas sibi tunc putat redire,
Cum coloephia sedecim comedit.
Post haec omnia cum libidinatur,
Non fellat (putat hoc parum uirile),
Sed plane medias uorat puellas.
Di mentem tibi dent tuam, Philaeni,
Cunnum lingere quae putas uirile.

LXVIII

TO INSTANTIUS RUFUS

Be cautious how you recommend
My verses to your father, friend;
The merry quip, the sportive whim,
Might hurt a sober soul like him;
But if he likes my wanton work
'Twould pass an elder of the Kirk.

* LXIX

TO CANIUS

Behold Theophila, your promised bride,
Whose mind with Attic learning deep is dyed.
Well might the garden of the happy sage
Claim her and all the Stoic equipage.

So little like the common female kind,
Your books in her a critic sure will find;
For e'en Pantaenis cannot her outshine
Though she be ranked with the Pierian nine.
It was a lover praised fair Sappho's art,
Your maid's as skilled and has a purer heart.

LXX

Ipsarum tribadum tribas, Philaeni,
Recte, quam futuis, uocas amicam.

* LXXI

AN UNFORTUNATE FAMILY

The wife and the husband both suffer from piles,
And so does their daughter, her husband, and boy.
The ulcer their steward and bailiff defiles,
And every farm-hand who is in their employ;
There are piles on them all, both on young and on old:
But piles of farm produce you'll nowhere behold.

* LXXII

TO PAULUS

I hope this December will bring you good store:
Not trumpery tablets or napkins galore,
Nor half pounds of incense—and short weight at that;
But may some rich client or millionaire fat
Weigh in with some plate from his family treasure;
Or what will, I know, give you even more pleasure,
May you beat all the experts you tackle at chess,
And when you play ball in your light athlete's dress
May you win the applause of the well-oiled bystanders,
And beat even Polybus with his left-handers.
Then if some low fellow should put down to me
A lampoon all reeking of base jealousy,
Come quick to my aid and protest—'This is spite—
Such rubbish as that Martial never could write.'

LXXIII

TO MAXIMUS

One house upon the Esquiline,
One where patricians dwell,
And hard beside Diana's shrine
You have a third as well.

You live near mournful Cybele,
You've Vesta's fane in view ;
Jove's ancient temple you can see,
You look upon the new.

With seven dwellings I despair
To find you when I call,
He who has mansions everywhere
Has not a home at all.

* LXXIV

TO THE GOD MERCURY

Cyllene's glory, heaven's pride, thou messenger with cunning tongue,
Whose golden wand with coiling snake doth splendid shine the gods among,
May thou thy stolen loves attain, fair Venus or young Ganymede,
And may thy mother's Ides adorned with bay proclaim some noble deed,
And Atlas bear a lighter load, if Carpus and Norbana now
To celebrate the nuptial day when first they met thou wilt allow.
A pious priest of wisdom he to wisdom pays his gift of love,
Sending his incense up to thee and faithful also unto Jove.

* LXXV

TO AN AMOROUS OLD WOMAN

You are ancient and ugly and haven't got money :
But yet you expect your full share of love's honey.

LXXVI

THE TOADY

To feasts and theatres you love to go
With men of rank and, when you chance to meet,
To lounge with them about a portico
Or street.

They let you bathe and dine with them, but what
Your dullard pride will never comprehend
Is that you are their mountebank, and not
Their friend.

LXXVII

PRESENTATION COPIES

Present you with my books? Not I indeed.
I know you want to sell them, not to read.

LXXVIII

POOR FOR HIMSELF

You dine on skate—or now and then
On greasy beans; what is the reason
That makes you send to other men
The rarest dainties of the season?

Boar, oysters, truffles, mullet, hare,
You give them. What an aberration,
To grudge yourself that generous fare
And spend your all on ostentation.

LXXIX

A CHOICE BRAND

He gave Consular wine when he asked me to dine,
'What! Opimius' vintage?' you say,
'Tis a brand of renown.' Nay, my host laid it down,
And he was made consul to-day.

* LXXX

TO FAUSTINUS

SINCE now our Roman peace the North refrains,
And war's grim trumpets cease their dreadful strains,
This little book to Marcellinus send,
For now to verse his leisure he can lend.
And if you wish the petty gift to increase
Send too a page to serve his hours of peace.
Not such a one as nursed by Getic cattle
On ice-bound rivers makes his hoopstick rattle,
But some young Lesbian boy whose cheeks glow warm,
Or Spartan yet unscourged by mother's arm.
He'll send to you instead from Hister's dales
A serf to feed your sheep in Tibur's vales.

LXXXI

PROPORTIONS

YOU'VE read my poems and condemn
Some thirty, so you say, of them :
The book's a good one I submit,
If there are thirty good in it.

* LXXXII

THE PRUDE

MENOPHIL wore for all to see
A ' ceinturon de chastetè,'
Big enough for the company.

I thought he wished his voice to spare
And so this trusty guard did wear
To keep him from temptation clear.

But I was wrong : the other night,
When he was dancing full in sight,
It fell—he knows the game all right.

LXXXIII

AN ENDLESS TASK

His face is so vast that his barber aghast
Perceived, ere his shaving was done,
A new crop had appeared ; there were whiskers and beard
On the side where his task had begun.

LXXXIV

TO SECUNDUS WITH HIS BOOK

My portrait painted by a cunning hand
Shall follow you, my little book, but go
To subject Ister and the Getic land,
For there Secundus rules the conquered foe.
Well shall he love your petty worth, and know
You show him Martial as no picture may ;
No Time nor Chance shall mar your brightness, though
Apelles' work has mouldered in decay.

LXXXV

TO SABELLUS

Your few quatrains are not amiss,
Your couplets too are neat ; for this
You earn a mild regard,
But little fame, for many men
Can write good verses now and then—
To make a book is hard.

LXXXVI

THE REASON AND EXCUSE

You always asked me to attend
Your birthday feasts when not your friend ;
Then why this change—so sudden too ?
For years you tried and proved me true,
Yet now at last you leave me out—
I know the cause beyond a doubt ;

No Spanish plate in compliment,
No dainty robe or cloak I sent,
Your ' generous ' dinner to requite ;
'Tis gifts not friends that you invite.
Now you will say, ' That wretched slave
Forgot my note ; I'll beat the knave.'

* LXXXVII

PETS

If Flaccus delights in a long-eared fox-hare,
If Canius dotes on his Libyan fair,
If Publius' darling's a dear little bitch,
And Cronius' a monkey as black as a witch,
If a knavish ichneumon gives Marius pleasure,
And his talking magpie seems to Lausus a treasure,
If Glaucilla entwines round her neck chilly snakes,
Telesilla a tomb for her nightingale makes ;
When they find their joy in such monsters as these,
Whom would not the face of fair Labycas please ?

LXXXVIII

POETIC GLORY

Can this be true ? In fair Narbonne 'tis said
My books are loved, all boys and sages con them,
Sweet matrons read them openly nor dread
To see a lord austere look sourly on them !

I count it naught so I am praised of these,
Should farthest Nile to me her homage proffer,
Should Hybla and Hymettus feed my bees,
Or gold of Tagus fill my swollen coffer.

For this is fame indeed ; my heart was sad
And doubting feared lest flattering might deceive it ;
When Lausus damned one song in three as bad
I thought his judgment erred, but now believe it.

LXXXIX

TO APOLLINARIS WITH A ROSE GARLAND

Go happy rose, let thy soft petals bind
Those locks now bright, and if, when they are white
With Time's chill snows, thou still thereon art twined,
May fate be kind, and Venus never slight
The flower she choose, the flower of her delight.

XC

THE DULL LEVEL

My work's uneven, you protest
And sometimes falls beneath my best;
A compliment, say I:
Dull bards on level plains that grope
Shall never err—or soar—with Pope,
Although they shine with Pye.

* XCI

TO JUVENAL WITH A CHRISTMAS PRESENT

These nuts at Saturn's feast to thee I send,
Dear Juvenal, my friend.
The rest to girls Priapus gave away,
With whom he loves to play.

XCII

VAIN WORDS

Ten times a day I've heard you say, 'If there is aught you need,
Pray come to me and you will see I am a friend indeed.'
I'm hailed for debt with angry threat, with usurers I plead,
But though you hear, you are not clear if there is aught I need.
My landlord came his rent to claim; though there, you gave no heed
To my distress, but cannot guess if there is aught I need.
'Tis all in vain that I complain my cloak has run to seed.
'Tis worn and chill; you wonder still if there is aught I need.
Ye stars malign, your powers combine false chatter to impede,
And let this bore not ask me more if there is aught I need.

XCIII

TO QUINTUS OVIDIUS IN ABSENCE

Narnia, aloof upon thy cloven hill
Where milk-white eddies ever whirl and play,
Why wilt thou keep my Quintus from me still?
'Tis thy delight to hold my friend away;

That spite doth mar the very fields I till ;
Save when he dwells thereby, no worth have they,
Spare me, nor let thy greed our friendship sever,
So may thy wondrous bridge endure for ever.

* XCIV

ON PAPILUS

Some unguent rare was kept with care
In a small onyx dish.
Papilus came and smelt the same—
And now it's putrid fish !

XCV

THE WINTER KISS

In December's frost and sleet
Still your chilly kisses greet
Every friend you chance to meet !
What a trick !
Such a vengeance to pursue
Were a cruel thing to do,
Though they all had beaten you
With a stick.
If my wife or little maid
To embrace me had essayed,
I had started quite afraid
In such weather,
And if you suppose your kiss
Is a yet sublimer bliss,
That idea you may dismiss
Altogether.
From your snout ('tis like a dog's)
Hangs the rime of frozen fogs,
And the beard it fairly clogs
Round your throat,
Where the shaggy mass coheres
Till it actually appears
Like the mass a shepherd shears
From a goat.
Though a greasy Gaul's caress
Might disgust me, I confess,
Would it cause such wretchedness
As you bring ?

Common decency display,
And in charity, I pray
Put your kisses safe away
Till the spring.

* XCVI

ON A CHILD'S GRAVE

SHED a tear and so pass by :
Here a little child doth lie,
Roman both by birth and name,
Who to death too early came.
Baby face and baby prattle
Could not save him in that battle.
Cruel Fate cut short his thread :
Little Urbicus lies dead.
May thy children happier be,
And live on surviving thee.

* XCVII

TO HIS BOOK

LITTLE book, when to Caesius Sabinus you come,
The bright shining star of his Umbrian home,
With friend Aulus Pudens, his townsman so true,
Even though he be busy he'll find time for you.
A thousand distractions may fill him with care,
But for my poor verses some hours he will spare ;
For he loves to peruse them, and gives them their station
Second only to Turnus in his estimation.
What glory and fame you are going to win,
How many a lover will call you within.
Every banquet and market will echo your praise,
Shops, houses, and porches, and little byways.
You are sent to one man, but as soon as you're known,
You'll be read, let me tell you, all over the town.

XCVIII

THE SPENDTHRIFT

THERE'S nothing that you do not buy ? Ah well,
Soon there'll be nothing that you do not sell.

* XCIX

TO CRISPINUS, DOMITIAN'S FAVOURITE

So may you see the Thunderer always kind
And Rome as loving as your Egypt find.
If my poor books you in the Palace hear—
For they are wont to amuse the Emperor's ear—
Venture to say—as fits a candid friend—
' He too some honour to this age doth lend.
Not Marsus nor Catullus him outshine '
'Twill be enough. I trust our Lord divine.

BOOK EIGHT

BOOK EIGHT

PREFACE

VALERIUS MARTIALIS to the EMPEROR DOMITIANUS CAESAR AUGUSTUS GERMANICUS DACICUS GREETING

All these books of mine, Sir, to which you have given their reputation, that is, their life, are your devoted servants, and I have no doubt that for this reason they will be read. But this volume, which is the eighth of my collected works, enjoys, in a greater degree than did the others, opportunities to show its loyalty, for which cause I have had less occasion for skilled invention, seeing that the subject-matter compensated for lack of it, and yet I have tried to produce some variety of theme now and again by the intermixture of a light jest or so, lest every verse should force upon your angelic modesty the praises which are its due, a course which might more easily be wearisome to you than satisfying to myself.

Although epigrams written by the gravest persons and men of the highest rank have been so composed as to assume the loose language of mimes, yet I have not allowed these of mine to speak with such accustomed licence, for as part of the book, and that the larger and better part, is associated with the majesty of your sacred name, the work must need remember that only those made clean by solemn purification may come near the temples, and to the end that my readers may know that I shall keep this precept, I have resolved to make my declaration of it in quite a short epigram at the beginning of this volume.

* I

PROPRIETY

LEARN to be modest, book, and pure of speech,
Before the Emperor's laurelled halls you reach.
Go, naked Venus : here thou hast no place.
Our Caesar's Pallas shall these pages grace.

* II

LONG LIFE TO THE EMPEROR

JANUS, father of the year,
  Double-faced and many-eyed,
When he saw our victor near
  Gazed on still unsatisfied.

'To your god and lord'—said he,
  'Four times Nestor's years I give.'—
One thing more we ask from thee :
  Give him too thy life to live.

III

THE NINTH MUSE

'FIVE books had been enough ; a further pair
  Are over many ; ere thy jesting pall,
  Retire, my muse, for fame hath given her all,
And thou and I find welcome everywhere.

Thy tomb, Messalla, shall be overthrown,
  To dust shall sink thy marbles, Licinus,
  While nations yet to be shall cherish us
And bear our songs to motherlands unknown.'

'Twas thus I spake and scarce had done, when she
  Who by the perfume of her floating hair
  And fragrant robe made sweet the laden air,
She, the ninth muse, Thalia, answered me.

'Ingrate, wouldst leave thy quips to play the sage ?
  Ah, sluggish bard, what more dost thou desire,
  Wilt take the buskin for the sock, aspire
To thunder savage war in epic rage ?

So might some bawling pedant cite thee—one
Whom generous youth and ripening maiden hate—
On swelling themes let prigs and dullards prate
Whose toil the midnight lamp sees yet undone.

Season with native salt thy merry lay,
Show Rome her very self in word and deed,
And so the piping of thy slender reed
Shall sound when clarion blasts have died away.'

* IV

TO DOMITIAN WITH THE NEW YEAR

Lo, the whole universe performs her vow,
And at thy altars makes her offering now.
The joy of men, methinks, doth not suffice:
The gods themselves to thee make sacrifice.

V

SQUANDERED WEALTH

You spent so much on rings for many a fair one,
That now, a Knight no more, you may not wear one.

* VI

ANTIQUES

Old Auctus is really a terrible bore
With his pedigree plate: I would rather he'd pour
The wine from cheap ware, for he tells such a tale
About every piece that the liquor goes stale—
'Laomedon once owned this goblet, my boy:
To get it Apollo with music built Troy.—
With this cup fierce Rhoetus engaged in the fray,
Against the Lapiths: it's still dinted to-day—
These beakers their value from Nestor derive,
He rubbed that dove smooth with his hand when alive—
In this bowl Achilles was wont for his friends
To mix a strong dose of his choicest old blends—
From this mug fair Dido did Bitias plight,
When she gave the repast to Aeneas that night'—

So he goes on: each tankard of old Priam smacks;
But you'll find that the wine is young Astyanax.

VII

A GIFT OF SILENCE

YOUR skill, your eloquence, are vast indeed,
One word an hour suffices you—or less ;
Yet for extended time you loudly plead :
How great your golden gift of speechlessness !

* VIII

DOMITIAN'S RETURN

THOUGH, Janus, you begin the flying year
And ages long renew when you appear ;
Though vows and incense first to you we pay,
And consuls at your feet their offerings lay ;
More joy is yours to know that in your time
Our God returns to Rome from northern clime.

IX

A FAIR OFFER

HYLAS, one quarter of his eyesight gone,
Proposed to pay three quarters of your fee ;
But now one eye is ruined, whereupon
He says he'll pay you half : if you agree,
Close with the offer quick ere worse befall,
Or soon, stone-blind, he will not pay at all.

X

A BARGAIN

HIS cloak is brand-new, the best Tyrian hue,
He has got a good bargain I know.
' Was it cheap ? ' do you say ? Well, of course, he won't pay,
And what is ten thousand—*to owe ?*

* XI

THE EMPEROR'S HOME-COMING

RHINE knows that thou at last hast come to Rome,
For our loud cheers reach even to his home.
Sarmatian tribes and savage Getae fear,
And Hister trembles at our shouts of cheer;
While in the Circus, homage once begun,
No man perceived four races had been run.
No chief has Rome so loved, nor thee of yore;
Now, though she wished, she cannot love thee more.

XII

TO PRISCUS

I MARRY wealth and be for life
Naught save the husband of my wife?
Nay 'twere a galling tether.
The man must rule, the wife obey,
Priscus, there is no other way
To make them pull together.

XIII

THE GUARANTEE

I BOUGHT him as a fool at vast expense;
Pay back the price, he shows a gleam of sense.

* XIV

GLASS-HOUSES

LEST your trees should turn yellow and shrink from the cold
Or too biting an air on their branches get hold,
Glass casements face south, keeping chill winds away,
And let in the sunlight and undefiled day:
But my garret's window has just one cracked pane
Where Boreas himself would not care to remain.
Do you wish your old friend to stay there till he freeze?
I should be better off as the guest of your trees.

* XV

DOMITIAN'S TRIUMPH

PANNONIAN victories thy glory prove
And every altar greets returning Jove.
The Latin tribes their triple largess earn,
And people, knights, and senate incense burn.
Our loyal love thou takest, Sire, on trust,
And Rome conceals her triumphs ; for she must.
But thy peace-laurels all the brighter show :
A prince's virtue is his folk to know.

XVI

ON CYPERUS

THOUGH long a baker, now you are
Seeking a fortune at the bar ;
Your gains are spent as soon as made,
You borrow too—the same old trade ;
Of old you made your bread : somehow
You still contrive to make it now.
And you will find that spendthrifts must
Like bakers seek to raise a crust.

* XVII

THE MODEST ADVOCATE

WE agreed that my fee should be twenty. Why then,
When the pleadings are over, now only send ten ?—
' You scarce said a word, and you lost me my case '—
Nay, you owe all the more, if I blushed in your place.

* XVIII

TO CERRINIUS

IF once your verse to public knowledge came,
You soon would equal or surpass my fame.
But for your friend such love you've ever shown
That you prefer his glory to your own.

So Virgil who might e'en with Pindar vie
Ne'er against Flaccus sung in rivalry,
And though he could have passed him in the race,
In tragedy to Varius gave place.
Full many a friend will give you wealth and fields ;
But rare is he who thus in genius yields.

XIX

FALSE APPEARANCES

He makes parade of poverty—a plot
To make us think him rich when he is not.

XX

THE WISE FOOL

You write a hundred lines a day ?
That means a crazy brain.
And yet you publish none, you say ;
That shows that you are sane.

* XXI

TO THE DAYSTAR ON THE MORNING OF DOMITIAN'S RETURN

Bright star, bring back the day : why check delight ?
Our Caesar comes : bright star, bring back the light.
Dost thou then ride with the slow-moving bear,
Thou art so long the city's call to hear ?
Castor to thee his flying steed would lend,
That so the dawn thou might more quickly send.
Why stay the sun ? His steeds are fain to take
The bit, and Memnon's mother is awake.
Nay, 'tis the moon that will not yield to day
And with the stars would fain in heaven stay
To see our chief. Sire, e'en in darkness come :
Thy people need not light, if thou be home.

XXII

NATURAL HISTORY

You said it was wild boar you gave me, Sir ;
'Twas but a farm-yard hog—you greatly err
Who think I can be cheated by a name ;
Only a mongrel mixes wild with tame.

XXIII

THE COOK

Because I beat my cook who spoilt the dinner
You say ' Oh cruel wretch, oh greedy sinner,
Such penalties for greater faults are fit.'
What greater crime, I ask, can cooks commit ?

XXIV

TO DOMITIAN

If aught we ask, my modest book and I,
  Grant it—we speak in no presumptuous tone,
Or suffer us to ask though thou deny ;
Incense and prayer offend not Jove on high,
  Men fashion images in gold or stone,
Not gods ; 'tis worship gives them sanctity.

* XXV

INDIFFERENCE

Only once when I was ill
  You on me compassion took
To look in ; so now I will
  Often give you an ill look.

* XXVI

DOMITIAN'S CIRCUS GAMES

The Indian hunter by the Eastern mead,
When pale he flies on his Hyrcanian steed,
Sees not as many tigers as have come
To-day, great Sire, to give delight to Rome.
Your games outshine those victory spoils of yore
That Bacchus once from Erythraea bore:
For when dark India to his car did bow,
A pair of tigers were for him enow.

XXVII

TO GAURUS

You rich old fool, the gifts that toady gave
Mean he would like to give one more—a grave.

* XXVIII

ON THE GIFT OF A TOGA FROM PARTHENIUS

Say, gown, most welcome gift from learned friend,
To what famed flock dost thou new glory lend?
Did the Apulian herbage for thee bloom
Where once Phalanthus had his Spartan home
And dark Galaesus with Calabrian tide
Brings riches to the teeming country-side?
Dost come from many-mouthed Timarus' bank
Whose waters Castor's noble charger drank,
Or did my Spanish Baetis wash thee too
When thou wert wool on some Hesperian ewe?
No Spartan dye thy whiteness might decrease,
Nor was Miletus worthy of thy fleece,
Than lilies and young privet brighter still
And ivory on Tibur's glorious hill,
Nor swan nor pigeon can compare with thee
Nor pearls fished up from Erythraean sea.

Yet though his gift is fairer than the snow
Parthenius is yet more fair, I trow.

No Babylonian robe could match with this
Though it were broidered by Semiramis,
Nor should I more the golden fleece admire
If Phryxus gave it me for my attire.
Oh how absurd my poor old cloak has grown,
Which I must wear with this palatial gown.

XXIX

SHORT AND LONG

Who writes a distich hopes to please
By brevity, the soul of wit ;
But if he fill a tome with these,
I pray you where's the benefit ?

* XXX

MUCIUS IN THE CIRCUS

What in our circus we count sport
Was glory once of noblest sort.
See in the blaze he thrusts his hand
And does the faltering fire command,
Spectator of the sacrifice,
Where his right arm may scarce suffice ;
For if the torture were not stayed
His left too in the fire were laid.
His crime I do not want to know,
To see that hand's for me enow.

XXXI

FATHER'S RIGHT

It throws a somewhat lurid light
Upon your private life
That you should crave the ' father's right '
When you have got a wife.

You tease the sovereign as a boon
To call you ' Sire of three ' ;
Go home, my friend, 'tis none too soon,
And cease your urgent plea.

But you are qualified—and more,
For in that distant home
You'll find your wife has borne you four
Whilst you were here in Rome.

* XXXII

ARETULLA'S DOVE

Through the still air to Aretulla's breast
A dove came gliding down and sank to rest.
'Twas chance, you say : yet there the bird remained
And from its proffered liberty refrained.
It may be that a sister's pious love
Avails the ruler of this world to move,
And from Sardinia's shore, the exile's home,
The dove with news of pardon now has come.

* XXXIII

ON RECEIVING A PRESENT OF A VERY THIN METAL CUP

A piece of gold leaf from your magistrate's crown
You send me, and say—' A gold tankard write down.'
It coated the floor of the stage, I should say,
And by the red saffron was washed quite away.
Or perhaps on the leg of your couch it appeared,
Till a nail scraped it off, for 'twas only veneered.
It shakes when a gnat in the distance goes by,
And is moved by the wing of a small butterfly.
The heat of a lamp makes it dance about neatly,
And to dip it in wine would dissolve it completely.
So those small nuts are coated which mean clients bring
With a sixpence perhaps as New Year's offering.
Bean tendrils are of thicker filaments spun,
A lily's leaf coarser that fades in the sun.
More dense stands the chalk on old Fabia's face,
More dense are the bubbles upon a mill-race,
More solid the fringe-nets that Roman girls wear,
And the German pomade which dyes yellow their hair.
A skin like to this has a chick still unhatched,
And with spots so transparent our dandies go patched.
Why send me a tankard ? A ladle or spoon
Would be surely sufficient—I'm speaking too soon :
A nice little shell you my present might call,
Or what is still cheaper—send nothing at all.

XXXIV

AN OLD MASTER

A GENUINE ' old master ' this,
And it would be, as I infer,
An even more authentic Mys,
If you were not that master, Sir.

XXXV

DEPTH TO DEPTH

IT is very strange, as it seems to me,
That you and your wife should not agree,
Since each is as vile as vile can be.

* XXXVI

ON DOMITIAN'S PALACE

No longer now need foreign Memphis prate
Of her high pyramids and regal state.
How small a part of thy Palatial Hall,
Doth Egypt make, earth's fairest sight of all.
You'ld fancy there the seven hills to espy
And Pelion on Ossa's not so high.
It pierces heaven, rising through the cloud,
And 'mid the stars its bright peaks thunder loud,
And take their fill of Phoebus' hidden light
Ere e'en Circeii has the sun in sight.
Yet though with heaven it may equal be,
It is not great enough, dear Sire, for thee.

XXXVII

TRUE KINDNESS

YOU gave him back his bond, but why
Should you suppose you gave thereby
The money that was due ?
He owed the hundred pounds before ?
To please him lend him twenty more—
And keep the I O U.

* XXXVIII

TO MELIOR ON THE ANNIVERSARY OF BLAESUS' DEATH

He who with constant love doth gifts bestow
On one who lives and can his kindness know,
Perchance a legacy expects in turn ;
But he who honours thus a funeral urn
Shows the great gulf 'twixt goodness and pretence,
For naught but solace hopes he from expense.
Such is your gift, by rumour known to all,
Who will not let the name of Blaesus fall
To sheer oblivion, but with birthday feast
After his death his glory have increased,
And from rich purse the clerkly throng supply
With funds to celebrate his memory.
While life remains, this shall your tribute be ;
And when you die this feast we still shall see.

* XXXIX

ON DOMITIAN'S BANQUETING HALL

Till now there was no place that could contain
Thy banquets, Sire ; no place where thou couldst drain
The sacred nectar mixed by Ganymede :
To-day thou hast the palace thou dost need.
Long be it ere to Jove thou shalt ascend
As guest : if he's in haste, let him descend.

XL

TO A STATUE OF PRIAPUS

No vine I give, no orchard fair,
Thou guardian god, to be thy care ;
Naught but thy native copse—and there
  Are others like to thee.
Warn off the thief, keep watch and ward,
And save the trees to warm their lord,
For if they fail—thou couldst afford
  At least one fire for me.

XLI

TWO SORROWS

So he is ' sorry not to send
His New Year gift '—I wonder now
In what sense he's a sorry friend.
He makes me sorry anyhow.

XLII

TO MATHO

Seek you a richer patron ? Many do
For these can give them larger doles, it's true.
Yet mine will give a hundred baths to you :
The best of luxuries is cheapest too.

XLIII

DIAMOND CUT DIAMOND

He poisons wives, she husbands by the dozen,
With Pluto's torch the marriage-god they cozen
Unite them, Venus, in the marriage tether,
So death shall carry off the two together.

* XLIV

TO TITULLUS

Live, my Titullus, live. 'Tis still too late
In boyhood to begin ; and yet you wait
Though age has come, and waste the precious days
Cooling your heels attendant at levées.

Through the three forums where the mud spurts at you,
Past Mavors' shrine and great Augustus' statue,
We see you rush each morn from nine to noon
Wet with the slobberings of all the town.

Rob, plunder, hoard : your wealth you must resign.
What though with yellow gold your coffers shine,
And bulky ledgers tell of thousands lent !
Your heir will swear you have not left a cent.

And when upon your bed of stone you lie,
While paper-fed your funeral pyre burns high,
Your mourning son will his sad loss assuage
By taking the first night your favourite page.

XLV

ON THE RETURN OF PRISCUS FROM SICILY

My Priscus has returned from Aetna's shore,
A milk-white pearl should mark the happy date ;
Strain clear the wine—thy precious essence pour,
Jar that hast known thy hundredth consulate.
When shall my joyous board so celebrate
A feast so dear, and warm my heart once more ?
Not till the Cyprian goddess shall restore
My Flaccus, shall I keep a feast so great.

* XLVI

TO CESTUS

Thou whose young beauty is by virtue graced,
Dear Cestus, than Hippolytus more chaste,
Diana fain would have thee at her side
To teach thee how to breast the rushing tide ;
And Cybele would let her Atys go,
On thee yet whole her favours to bestow ;
Even to Jove thou couldst have given bliss,
If thou hadst known to do aught else but kiss.
Ah happy bride, who thee a man shall make,
And in her arms a groom so tender take.

XLVII

A TRIPLE CLIP

Part of your beard is plucked away, part shorn, part clipped instead ;
Who would believe me should I say you've but a single head ?

* XLVIII

A WARNING

CRISPINUS was changing his dress yesterday
And handed his cloak to a stranger, they say.
Please return it, good sir, and we'll count it a joke:
It is not Crispinus who asks, but the cloak.
With commonplace wearers that stuff will not go,
Its Syrian purple requires a beau.
If you're just out for plunder and don't want it known,
The next time you try, lay your hands on a gown.

* XLIX

ON ASPER

FOR beauty I'd reckon blind Asper's girl high:
But it's plain that with him it's not lust of the eye.

* L

ON DOMITIAN'S TRIUMPHAL BANQUET

GREAT as the feast in heaven on that night,
Which did proclaim the Giant's fallen might,
When humble godlets could with Jove recline,
And Fauns had leave to call on him for wine:
So great thy victory banquet, Sire, to-day,
When our rejoicings make e'en heaven gay.
Knights, senate, people, all are welcome there,
And with their chieftain taste ambrosial fare.
How has thy looked-for largess been increased:
A dole thou promised and hast given a feast.

* LI

ON AN EMBOSSED BOWL

WHENCE comes this bowl, by Mys or Myron made,
By Mentor or by Polycleitus graved?
No leaden spots upon its surface stay,
Nor cloudy mass that fears the fire's assay.
Its golden ore more bright than amber gleams,
Its frosted silver snow-white ivory seems.

And with like skill is the fair metal dight,
Round as the moon in full refulgent light.
A goat stands out arrayed in fleece of gold,
Such as fair Hellë might have loved of old;
E'en a Cinyphian shearer would repine
To shear his coat, and Bacchus give his vine.
A golden love two-winged across him strides,
And blithely pipes as on his back he rides,
E'en as a dolphin once Arion bore,
A vocal burden, to the further shore.
No menial slave must fill this bowl with wine;
Cestus, the hand that bears it must be thine.
Pour thou the nectar, gracious one; for see
Both goat and god are fain to drink with me:
And let the giver's name its letters lend
ISTANTI RUFI to the cups you blend.
If Telethusa comes at this, love's hour,
I'll keep myself for her and drink but four:
If she is doubtful, then I'll toss off seven:
But if she comes not, I'll have all eleven.

* LII

THE LONG TASK

I LENT my friend Rufus my barber, a boy
As skilful as Thalamus, once Nero's toy,
Who did the imperial family shave;
For my friend said he wished just one clipping to have.
So the lad at his bidding cut off every hair,
Rufus, mirror in hand, seeing that he took care;
And when he had finished with infinite pain,
Was ordered to do it all over again.
Indeed, that one head he so many times sheared,
That when he came back he himself had a beard.

* LIII

TO CATULLA

FAIREST of beauties, now or long ago;
Vilest of wantons, long ago or now;
How oft I've wished, when I held you embraced,
You were less beautiful or else more chaste.

* LIV

TO DOMITIAN

GREAT are thy gifts and greater yet shall be—
For thou alone, dear Sire, canst conquer thee.
But 'tis not they that our affection move ;
It is because of thee thy gifts we love.

* LV

ON A LION SHOWN BY DOMITIAN IN THE CIRCUS

FIERCE as the roar we hear in Afric lands
When the wood raves with countless lion bands,
And the pale shepherd to his Punic farm
Calls back his bulls and sheep in dire alarm ;
So in our Roman ring there echoed loud
A monster, who but one yet seemed a crowd,
So great, all lions would his empire own,
And marble-decked Numidia yield the crown.

What glory to his neck his raised mane gave,
Falling majestic in a golden wave !
How that broad breast became our hunter's might ;
What joy was his to die, Lord, in thy sight !
Who to the Afric woods such glory lent ?
Was he perchance from Cybele's chariot sent ?
Or did thy brother or thy mighty sire
Send down the beast from great Alcides' fire ?

* LVI

PATRON AND POET

THE days of our grandfathers to our own great times must yield
And with her mighty Emperor Rome holds a wider field.
Why is it then, you ask, that Virgils never now appear
To sing of war and war's alarms in accents loud and clear ?
Well, give me a Maecenas and I'll soon find you a Maro ;
Perhaps on your own farm to-day some Virgil guides the harrow.

Young Tityrus in years gone by bewailed his plundered sheep,
And fields by poor Cremona's side his father could not keep,
Until at last the Tuscan knight dispelled his tearful grief
And drove away grim poverty and gave him swift relief.
'Here's gold,' he said; 'enjoy it and become our greatest poet;
And love my fair Alexis too, if you would like to do it.'
That lovely youth, as it would chance, was standing then at table,
Whose mouth ambrosial to tempt e'en Jupiter was able;
And at the words he poured the dark Falernian rosy-lipped
And gave the goblet to the guest wherefrom himself had sipped.
At once the enraptured bard forgot his sun-burnt Thestylis
And stalwart Galatea for a more romantic bliss,
And he who with 'The Gnat's Decease' in humble strains began,
Chanted the praise of Italy and sang the 'Arms and Man.'
Why should I tell of Varius and Marsus and the rest,
How many a singer has a patron's benefits confessed?
You say—'Were I Maecenas, then would you have Virgil's art?'
No, no: but I'm a Marsus and I well could play his part.

* LVII

DEAD MEN'S BONES

THREE teeth had Picens till one afternoon
Beside the tomb where he'll be buried soon,
He coughed them up and laid them there to rest,
Last fragments of the set he once possessed.
He's spared his heir one duty: that he owns:
For he himself has gathered his own bones.

LVIII

TO ARTEMIDORUS

MY friend, although you take your name
From Artemis, you cannot claim
She gave you such a cloak;
So rough and soldier-like is it;
Henceforward I shall call you 'Kit'—
'Tis just—a *Martial* joke!

* LIX

THE MASTER THIEF

Do you see that old fellow with only one eye
And beneath his rogue's brow a big black cavity ?
Beware : he's a thief and a hard one to catch ;
Autolycus even was scarcely his match.
If he's ever your guest, watch him closely ; for then
He revels in plunder and beats two-eyed men.
Your slaves see the cups disappear with dismay,
And ladles and napkins he tucks snug away,
While even your mantle he draws from your arm
And goes off himself with two cloaks nice and warm.
If he sees a poor slave-boy asleep by the side
Of his lamp, he will steal it : he's no proper pride.
And if all else fail, lest his cunning he lose,
He will stealthily filch from his man his own shoes.

LX

ON CLAUDIA

' She's just of the Colossus' height,' say you ?
Were she a cubit shorter, 'twould be true.

LXI

ON CHARINUS

He's pale with rage, to bursting he is nigh enough,
With angry spite he cannot rave or cry enough,
He'd hang himself on any bough that's high enough.
'Tis not my world-wide fame that makes him furious,
Nor my repute at home he holds injurious,
Nor yet my scrolls in form and hue luxurious ;
I have a little house—'tis no aspiring one,
A summer cot, a modest and retiring one ;
I buy the mules I ride, instead of hiring one ;
Hence all this angry spite, what can one say for it ?
What evil curses imprecate and pray for it ?
Would my estate were his, then he should pay for it.

LXII

A BAD OMEN

You write on the back of your paper, 'tis wrong,
A thing of ill omen to do;
For how can you wonder the genius of song
Is turning his back upon you?

* LXIII

TO AULUS

You are courting Alexis and Thestylus too,
And my Hyacinthus you're ready to woo.
You're a true poet-lover, of that there's no doubt,
For a poet's pet fancy you always smell out.

* LXIV

TO CLYTUS

Eight times, Clytus, in each year
Birthday gifts to you we bear.
Every month save three or four
Heralds in your natal hour.
Though your cheeks may smoother be
Then a stone worn by the sea,
And your hair more black withal
Than a mulberry ripe to fall;
Though you're softer far than down
Or new cheese, and though you own
Breasts as round and full as those
Virgin brides keep for their spouse;
Yet to us you seem quite worn
With old age, more often born
Than King Priam was of yore
Or the chief of Pylos' shore.
Prithee, cease, this thievish play,
In one year have one birthday.
Or if you don't stop your fun
I shall call you 'No man's son.'

* LXV

DOMITIAN'S BIRTHPLACE

HERE, where Returning Fortune's precincts shine,
Was erst the place where stood our lord divine,
Graced with the noble dust of northern fight
And shedding from his face refulgent light,
While Rome did greet her chief in white array
With voice and hand, her locks enwreathed with bay.
Great is its fame ; for here besides there stands
The arch triumphant over conquered lands,
With droves of elephants and chariots twain
Wherein our golden chief doth hold the rein.
This gate, true entry to the War-God's town
Befits thy triumphs, Sire ; so all men own.

* LXVI

A NOBLE HOUSE

INCENSE and victims to Augustus bring,
Ye Muses, for your Silius' offering.
Now Caesar, Rome's most sure and only ward,
Hath for our poet once again regard,
And bids the lictor strike upon his door
And the twelve axes to his son restore,
So that but one thing waits to crown his joy,
The happy purple for his second boy.
Though Pompey threefold office once obtained,
And great Agrippa triple honours gained,
Yet Silius thinks he the same fame has won
If Janus holds the name of either son.

* LXVII

THE EARLY GUEST

IT is not yet eleven, and yet you have come
Prepared to dine with me in my humble home.
The courts have just finished the first morning session,
And at Flora's games now 'tis the hunter's procession.
Well, well ! Call the boys—they had gone up the town
To bathe—spread the couches : my dear friend, sit down.
' Warm water '—you say : nay, the cold's not here yet,
The stove has gone out, and the kitchen's all wet.
Come another time sooner and don't till noon wait :
For dinner you're early, for breakfast you're late.

* LXVIII

TO ENTELLUS

E'EN those who've seen Alcinöus' domains
Prefer the country that your house contains.
Lest jealous winter should the clusters sear
And frost consume the gifts of Bacchus there,
Your vineyard blooms 'neath a transparent lid,
Its lucky grapes roofed over yet unhid.
So shine a maiden's limbs through bombasine,
So are the pebbles in clear water seen.
What power will nature not allow to skill!
You make grim winter to be autumn still.

LXIX

LAUDATOR TEMPORIS ACTI

ALL save the ancient poets you decry,
The living cannot gain your approbation;
Excuse me—'tis not worth my while to die,
Even to earn your valued admiration.

LXX

TO NERVA

GENTLE is Nerva, and his tongue doth shrink
Too modestly to show her proper skill,
And he that might have drained Permessus' rill
Constrained his thirst and sipped the very brink;

And though his brow wear but a sprig of bay,
And though he will not woo the breeze of fame,
Yet him doth learned Nero's verse acclaim
And greet him the Tibullus of to-day.

* LXXI

TO POSTUMIANUS

FOUR pounds' weight of silver ten winters ago
You sent as my present, I'ld have you to know.
Next year I hoped more, or at least just the same,
But to my disgust 'twas but two pounds that came.

In the third and fourth years your gift still smaller grew,
In the fifth 'twas one pound, and most common stuff too.
The sixth dropped to a platter, eight ounces I found ;
And then came a cup that weighed just half a pound.
The eighth brought a ladle, two ounces or less,
The ninth a thin tea-spoon, I blush to confess.
You can't lower go in this tenth year, it's plain :
So let's, if you please, start at four pounds again.

* LXXII

TO HIS BOOK, AN ADVANCE COPY FOR ARCANUS

You are not yet with purple gay,
Nor is your roughness smoothed away,
But hasten, book, and catch my friend,
Who now his distant way must wend
To lovely Narbo and once more
Take up his task of legal lore.
You have indeed a happy lot,
For now two joys at once you've got ;
Both him and that fair town you'll view :
Ah, how I wish that I were you !

* LXXIII

TO INSTANTIUS RUFUS

Instantius, than whom no man more true
Lives on this earth, no friend more sure than you ;
If you would have my Muse true vigour prove,
Give me, O give me something I can love.
'Twas Cynthia made Propertius a poet ;
Lycoris showed young Gallus how to do it ;
From Nemesis Tibullus gained his name ;
Through Lesbia Catullus rose to fame.
And so with me : if some Corinna kind
Or beautiful Alexis I could find,
Even in Mantua my verse were known,
And Ovid's folk would hail me as their own.

LXXIV

ON A DOCTOR TURNED GLADIATOR

A FIGHTER to-day and a doctor before,
Time makes little change in your course.
The force of your physic was fatal before,
So now is your physical force !

* LXXV

DEAD GAULS

A GAUL late one night, who had just come to Rome,
Was making his way from the Colonnade home,
When he caught his big toe and his ankle-bone sprained,
And stretched at full length on the pavement remained.
What was to be done ? He could not himself rise,
And the one servant with him was so small in size
That he scarcely a very light lantern could bear,
And helplessly gazed at his lord lying there.
Chance came to his aid ; for four slaves came along
With a pauper's cheap corpse, one of that endless throng
Who move to the burial-ground every day,
And his man plucked up courage the bearers to stay—
' Please stop : you may do what you like with the dead,
If you'll take on your bier my fat master instead.'
The loads were soon changed and the Gaul, lifted high,
Made shift on the pauper's scant litter to lie.
We might very well now sing the circus refrain,
' You are dead, master Gaul '—over him once again.

LXXVI

TO GALLICUS

' PRAY tell me plainly what you think of it,'
You always say, ' I love a frank report.'
Thus when you read the products of your wit,
Thus when you plead a client's case in court,
You pester me a verdict to extort,
And since a flat refusal seems uncouth
Here is the truth you ask for, plain and short—
That truth is that you do not want the truth.

LXXVII

TO LIBER

If friends could choose, so dearly loved art thou,
Liber, unfading roses should be thine,
Short-lived are ours, yet bind therewith thy brow,
And let thy locks with rarest unguents shine,
Crown high the cups with dark Falernian wine,
And follow love with all his dear delight ;
Though brief the span that grudging fates assign,
Joy thus may lengthen it in their despite.

* LXXVIII

ON THE GAMES GIVEN BY STELLA IN DOMITIAN'S HONOUR

Such games as might the gods' own victory grace,
Or Bacchus celebrate with smiling face,
Now for thy northern triumph Stella gives
And still unworthy of his love believes.
For him suffice not Hermus' golden sands
Nor Tagus with the wealth of western lands.

Each day hath its own gift ; the bounteous cord
Rich plunder to the people doth afford.
Now sportive tokens fall in sudden cloud
And give the arena victims to the crowd :
Now birds, no longer mangled, come by lot
Unharmed to those who have the ticket got.

Why should I tell of prizes three times ten,
Such as the consuls' games scarce give to men.
For there is one thing that surpasses all ;
Thou, Sire, art here to watch thy festival.

LXXIX

THE CONTRAST

Your lady friends are ill to see,
All old or ugly as can be,
And in their company you go
To banquet, play, and portico ;
This hideous background you prepare
To seem, by contrast, young and fair.

* LXXX

ON DOMITIAN'S REVIVAL OF PUGILISM

Thou dost restore the wondrous days gone by,
And suffer not the hoary past to die ;
For in the circus now by our old rite
Valour with simple strength of hand may fight.
So 'neath thy rule we tend each ancient shrine,
And worship Jove, yet hold the cot divine.
New rites established, old revived, we see :
What is, what was, alike we owe to thee.

* LXXXI

ON GELLIA'S PEARLS

Not on the Mother's sacred vows,
Not on Isis' bovine spouse,
Not on any god at all,
Gellia in her oaths doth call.
It is by her pearls she swears,
Kisses every one she wears,
Fondles it and calls it brother,
Sister : though she is a mother
With two babes, she loves her pearls
Better than she loves her girls ;
Swears she could not live a day
If her pearls were stol'n away.
Would you lead the dame a dance ?
Now, sir cracksman, here's your chance.

LXXXII

TO DOMITIAN

Whilst others come thy grace to supplicate,
My little wreath before thy throne I lay ;
Lord, who canst tend the Muses and the state,
So may my garland please thee—and I pray
Uphold thy bards, they are thy glory, they
Thy chief delight and care : for thy renown,
Though decked with Saviour's oak or victor's bay,
May we not weave our poet's ivy crown ?

BOOK NINE

BOOK NINE

PREFACE

Hail, dear Toranius, brother most beloved. The epigram which is supernumerary to my book I wrote to Stertinius, a man of the highest rank who has expressed a wish to place a bust of me in his library. I thought it well to write to you about him that you might know who this Avitus is—Farewell and prepare to act the host.

Fame is your right, O noble soul,
Though you reject your due
Till Death, defying your control,
Shall force the crown on you.
Meantime may this quatrain I send
Beneath my bust proclaim
'Twas you that chose to set your friend
With bards of noblest name.

Reader, I gained what I desired,
The palm for lighter verse,
And if you hold me not inspired
You love me none the worse.
Let others claim the epic rage,
The seers of lofty dreams,
While men unwearied con my page
That trills on little themes.

* I

ON DOMITIAN'S TEMPLE

While Janus gives his name to winter's tide ;
While from Domitian autumn gains new pride,
As summer from Augustus ; while the day
Of the Germanic Kalends marks our sway
O'er conquered Rhine ; while Jove's rock-temple stands,
And matrons come with prayer and suppliant hands
Worship to pay to Julia divine ;
So long shall last the mighty Flavian shrine,
With sun and stars coeval and with Rome,
Work of unconquered hand, the heaven its home.

II

TO LUPUS

On us you've not a farthing to expend,
But oh, how generous to your lady friend!
On dainty cakes and pastries she is fed,
Your guest has only black and musty bread ;
For her iced wine is poured of vintage rare,
For him a muddy acid ordinaire ;
You sell a farm her favours to command
For one short hour ; your friend tills alien land.
She flaunts in priceless Orient pearls—and yet
Your client haled away is sold for debt ;
Eight Syrian slaves the minx's litter bear,
Your needy friend a pauper's bier will share :
Rhea, you choose the scum of all the nation,
Is he not worthy of—initiation ?

* III

TO DOMITIAN

Were you, great Sire, from heaven to reclaim
All you have given, a creditor in name,
Though great Olympus were put up for sale
And the gods auctioned, naught would it avail—
Atlas would bankrupt go, nor Tonans get
A shilling in the pound to pay his debt.

How could he settle for the Capitol
Or for his shrine with oak-leaf garlands full ?
Pallas I leave ; she shares with you, we know :
But what must Juno for two temples owe ?
And then the twins, Alcides and Apollo,
The Flavian chapel—and there's more to follow.
You must be patient, Sire, and wait your day :
Jove's coffers lack the wherewithal to pay.

* IV

THE PRICE OF SECRECY

A COUPLE of pound hasn't much of a sound, but for everyday
use it's enough ;
If you want something more you will have to pay four and
for that you get really hot stuff.
Some people give ten, but the inference then is of black-
mailers they are afraid,
And betwixt you and me, as I think you'll agree, what they
pay for is—' *Not a word said.*'

* V

TWO OF A TRADE

CLEVER Jenny wants to wed,
Wants to marry Joe.
Master Joseph shakes his head :
Joe is clever too.

* VI

ON DOMITIAN'S REVIVAL OF THE LEX SCANTINIA

THEE, O world-father who with conquering sword
The Rhine hast humbled, O most modest lord,
The cities thank for people : in thy time
To bring forth children is at last no crime.
No boy, polluted by a pander's art,
Mourns for his manhood now, no mother's heart
Is wrung by grief when to her child she shows
The pittance which the haughty pimp allows.
The shame our marriage-beds had lost, by thee
Even in brothels we begin to see.

* VII

TO AFER

Now you're home from your travels in lands far away,
For a week I've been wanting to bid you good-day.
' He's engaged,' ' he's asleep ' ; that has been my reply :
That's enough ; if you won't have—' good-day,' here's—
' good-bye.'

* VIII

ON DOMITIAN'S LAW PROTECTING CHILDREN

As though, O shame, it did not him suffice
To prostitute our youths to venal vice,
The pander seized our cradles for his prey
And forced young babes to earn him shameful pay,
Till Rome's great father wrathful at the sight
Saved the poor children from their monstrous plight ;
E'en as to youths he lately gave his aid
Lest they by cruel lust be sterile made.
Boys, youths, and elders loved thee, Sire, before :
Now infants too thy majesty adore.

* IX

TO BITHYNICUS

Not a penny from Fabius, though every year,
Fifty pounds' worth of presents you gave !
Never mind : we are all in the same boat, I fear,
And in future that money you'll save.

* X

TO CANTHARUS

You're very glad with friends to dine,
Yet there you bawl, backbite, and blether.
Such ways, good sir, you'd best resign :
Free speech and greed go ill together.

* XI

TO DOMITIAN'S CUPBEARER EARINOS
('SPRINGBOY')

A NAME that's born with the primrose,
Wherefrom the year its best part knows,
Which draws from Attic flowers their scent
And phoenix perfumes subtly blent,
Sweeter than nectar's juice divine,
Which, Atys, thou wouldst wish were thine,
And he who holds for Jove his cup;
A name which in our court brings up
Venus and Cupid to the call,
Soft, delicate, and famed withal;
This in deft verse I fain would tell,
But, stubborn syllable, you rebel.
'Eiarinos' the poets write;
But they are Greeks who may indite
Whate'er they please and in their song
Have Ares short and Ares long.
We cannot such glib license use,
For Romans court a sterner Muse.

* XII

TO THE SAME

IF I got my name from autumn, I Oporinos should be:
Winter stars would give another, then Chimerinos you'ld see:
Therinos the months of summer would for me as title bring:
Tell me now what you should call me when I take my name
from Spring?

* XIII

TO THE SAME

THOU hast a name which tells of vernal hours
When Attic bees lay waste the short-lived flowers;
Which Venus with her pen would joy to write
Or broider with soft silk and needle bright;
Which should be made with pearls from India's land
Or amber balls warmed by a virgin's hand;
Which cranes with flying wing to heaven bear,
And finds its rightful place with Caesar here.

* XIV

ON A PARASITE

Do you think that this man, whom your generous board
Has got you for friend, can true friendship afford ?
It's your oysters and mullet he loves, sir, not you :
If my dinners were good, he would be my friend too.

* XV

A MUCH-MARRIED LADY

Chloe seven husbands had,
In the churchyard laid 'em,
On the stone the record sad,
All their names engraved 'em ;
Then added—' Chloë's work you see.'
O what delicious naïveté !

* XVI

EARINOS' VOW

His mirror, beauty's wisdom, and his hair
To Aesculapius an offering
The boy our lord most loves to-day doth bear,
Who by his name recalls the hours of spring.
Happy the land that is with such gifts fee'd :
For him we would not take e'en Ganymede.

* XVII

ON THE SAME

Latona's grandson, by whose potions mild
The Fates with too brief distaff are beguiled,
These locks, his lord's delight, thy boy sends now
To thee from Rome to pay his solemn vow,
And this bright glass has added to the hair
Whose verdict oft assured him he was fair.
Gone are his tresses bright ; yet none the less
Preserve for him his youthful comeliness.

XVIII

A PETITION TO THE EMPEROR

While Caesar reigns, long may my country cot
And tiny house in Rome be mine ; but lo,
Yon straining pole doth bring my garden-plot
Its scanty waters from the vale below :
But here, though nigh at hand the fountains flow
No quickening drop doth slake my parching home ;
One rill divine a bard would love to owe
To him, the Muses' lord, the God of Rome.

XIX

TO SABELLUS

You praise the gourmet's baths ; do you design
To share his water, or his food and wine ?

* XX

ON THE FLAVIAN TEMPLE, BUILT UPON THE SITE OF DOMITIAN'S BIRTHPLACE

This open space, with marble and with gold
Emblazoned, knew our infant lord of old.
O happy earth, that heard his wailing cry,
And as he crept could see and help supply.
Here stood the house which to our world has given
What Rhodes and pious Crete bestowed on heaven.
Then eunuch priests the baby god concealed
With all their strength, loud rattling lance on shield ;
For thee, great Caesar, Jove himself had care,
And bolt and aegis stood for shield and spear.

XXI

LIVE UP TO YOUR NAME

Artemidorus bought a pretty slave
And sold his lands to pay—the price was great—
But Calliodorus with the sum he gave
Became the master of the whole estate.

Who bears the name of Artemis should rate
Love at a price far meaner ; and its charm,
To him that's called from beauty, prove a bait
Much more alluring than a dirty farm.

XXII

TO PASTOR

Friend, if for larger wealth I seem to pine,
It is not as the vulgar herd desire it ;
They long that Rheims may toil to give them wine,
And slave-drive half a county to acquire it ;
They hunt for ormolu and Adams fine
Or gilded ' Empire ' stuff,—I don't admire it—
And quaff from crystals of the rarest sort
Dark draughts of richest Burgundy or Port.

The liveried menial lies beneath my ban,
I seek no crowd of fools to bow before me,
Let others keep the pampered serving-man,
To see a six-foot flunkey standing o'er me,
To drive a four-in-hand, or spick-and-span
To ride the Row—these things would simply bore me.
What do I want ? (may heaven upon me frown
If this is false.)—To beautify the town.

* XXIII

TO CARUS, ON A WREATHED BUST OF DOMITIAN

Martial : Tell me where now the golden garland lies
That Alban Pallas gave thee for thy prize.
Carus : See'st thou our master's face in marble wrought ?
To grace his locks my crown took wings unsought.
Martial : The pious oak may grudge the olive now
Its glory ; for it wreathes our victor's brow.

* XXIV

ON THE SAME

Who carved our master's bust from Latin stone
And so the Phidian ivory outshone ?
'Tis Jove's own face ; nay 'tis the world we see :
So the god thunders when from clouds he's free.
Athena gave thee more than that one crown ;
She too this worshipped image once did own.

* XXV

TO AFER

If we gaze at your Hyllus as he passes by,
You look at your guests with a most troubled eye.
What crime is it in a fair boy to delight?
Don't the sun and the gods and the stars please our sight?
Shall I turn my eyes from him and hide my face up,
As though 'twere a Gorgon presenting my cup.
Even savage Alcides let Hylas be seen,
And Ganymede sports with young Hermes, I ween.
To your table you'd better blind Oedipus call,
If you don't want your minions to be viewed at all.

XXVI

TO NERVA

Send verse to Nerva? Nay, a bard so bold
  Might give cheap scent to Cosmus, hope to please
Paestum with privet flowers or marigold,
  Send bitter honey to Hymettus' bees.
  Yet is there grace in humbler lines—for these
Are olives taken after daintier cheer;
Yet wonder not should my Thalia fear
  (Knowing her meaner power) your face to see;
Did not a Nero dread your taste austere,
  Reading his merry verse? and so doth she.

XXVII

Cum depilatos, Chreste, coleos portes
Et uulturino mentulam parem collo
Et prostitutis leuius caput culis,
Nec uiuat ullus in tuo pilus crure,
Purgentque saeuae cana labra uolsellae,
Curios Camillos Quintios Numas Ancos
Et quidquid usquam legimus pilosorum
Loqueris sonasque grandibus minax uerbis,
Et cum theatris saeculoque rixaris.
Occurrit aliquis inter ista si draucus
Iam paedagogo liberatus et cuius
Refibulauit turgidum faber penem,
Nutu uocatum ducis, et pudet fari
Catoniana, Chreste, quod facis lingua.

* XXVIII

ON A BUST OF THE ACTOR LATINUS

I AM Latinus, darling of the stage,
The applause, the pride, the wonder of my age,
Who could have wooed stern Cato to the play,
And made Fabricius laugh his cares away.
Naught from the theatre did my morals take,
And only in a farce was I a rake.
Virtue you need our master's grace to win ;
He is a god who sees the heart within.
'A parasite of Phoebus'—as you will :
But let Rome know I served her great Jove still.

XXIX

ON AN OLD WOMAN'S GRAVE

DEATH snatched you away before your day and took you to
Lethe's shore,
You could beat old Parr, but Methuselah might give you a
month or more.
What a voice to be dumb—it could overcome the market's
or schoolroom's clatter,
A revivalist hymn, or the river's brim with a million cranes
a-chatter.
There was none like you foul tricks to do, as a witch you have
left no double :
Be your covering slight and of sand so light that the dogs
may have little trouble.

XXX

ON THE DEATH OF RUSTICUS

FOUL Asian coast, his life hast thou betrayed,
On thee by guilty waves his corpse was tossed.
Close in her breast his loving spouse conveyed
The sacred urn, too soon the seas were crossed,
Too soon those ashes in the earth she laid,
And seemed twice widowed of a love twice lost.

* XXXI

ON A PICTURE OF A VOTIVE OFFERING

Velius, what time he hastened to the wars,
For our great Caesar vowed a goose to Mars.
The moon had scarce eight times in circle met
When lo, the god claimed payment of the debt.
The bird rejoicing to the altar came
And fell a humble victim in the flame.
See those eight coins that hang from out its beak :
'Twould say—' For this I hid them '—could it speak.
When victims thus with silver truth reveal,
They show us, Sire, there is no need for steel.

* XXXII

SIMPLICITY

Give me the girl who's always willing,
  Who can suffice for lovers three,
Whose price complete is just one shilling,
  Who gives my man what she gives me.
Let Frenchmen in their arms enfold
  Fine ladies with their silks and all,
They care for nothing else but gold,
  Give me the girl who wears a shawl.

* XXXIII

THE WONDER

In the baths what is now the most pleasing diversion
Is to go and see Maro displaying his person.

XXXIV

ON DOMITIAN'S TEMPLE

The King of Gods beheld our Flavian shrine
  And mocked his own on Ida for a cheat ;
  Deep were the cups he quaffed of nectar sweet,
Ere for Rome's patron, Mars, he poured the wine.

Phoebus and Dian there he saw recline
By Hercules and duteous Mercury,
And said, ' Ye built my fane of old in Crete ;
But Caesar is more dutiful than ye.'

XXXV

THE NEWSMONGER

These are the tricks that you devise to pay for hospitality,
You forge a hundred silly lies and state them as reality,
You know King Ferdinand's design discussed in far Bulgaria,
And what reserves are on the Rhine, their numbers in Bavaria,
Haig's last dispatches you have conned while still undried the ink of them,
You see the victor laurels donned before the soldiers think of them.
You tell the Tigris' rise in feet, and what the flood has meant to us,
How many pounds of maize or meat America has sent to us.
The next Nobel awards you know, and all the facts that guided them,
You give the winners' names although the Trust has not decided them.
Give up this foolish fashion pray, you get but small regard from it,
And if you grace my board to-day, remember ' News ' is barred from it.

* XXXVI

TO EARINOS

The Phrygian youth, delight of the other Jove,
Had seen our Emperor's darling from above
With hair new-shorn, and cried, ' Great ruler, now
Grant me what Caesar doth his boy allow.
Down's on my cheeks concealed beneath these locks,
And Juno calls me man and jeers and mocks.'
To him—' My sweetest boy,' the Sire replied,
' Your wish by facts and not by me is denied.
Our Caesar has a thousand boys like thee ;
His palace scarce can hold their company.
But if shorn hair should give thee a man's face,
I should have no one left my board to grace.'

XXXVII

TO GALLA

Whilst in your room you deck your beauty bright,
Next door the coiffeur braids your lovely hair,
Your frocks and teeth are laid away at night,
So portioned out in boxes here and there
You lie, and your complexion sleeps elsewhere ;
Beneath a brow, remodelled day by day,
Your eye still ogles men. Be reverent, pray,
Nor hawk about each prehistoric charm :
Though love is dull and dim of sight they say,
He sees you well enough to take alarm.

* XXXVIII

ON A BOY JUGGLING WITH A SHIELD

You play, Agathinus, a most risky game,
But you can't get your buckler to fall all the same ;
When you shun it, it follows, returning through air,
And lights on your finger-tips, foot, back, or hair.
The stage may be wet with the red saffron rain,
And the boisterous wind make all awnings seem vain,
But unheeded it runs o'er the boy's careless limbs
Not baffled by showers or the breeze's mad whims.
Though you try to go wrong you can't do it at all ;
It will need all your skill if the shield is to fall.

XXXIX

ON CAESONIA'S BIRTHDAY

Rhea, thou shouldst have chosen for thy son
This day that saw our lord of Thunder's birth
And sweet Caesonia's. In all the earth
Is none that owes her mother more and none
More glad than he, her Sire, to bless the morn
Whereon his Caesar and his child were born.

* XL

NUPTIAL FAVOURS

When Diodorus sailed from Egypt's shore
His prize to take at Rome, Philaenis swore,
If he returned, she'ld give him that sweet kiss
Which even Sabine matrons know is bliss.
His ship was wrecked, but through the raging main
He swam to land her promise to obtain.
Yet even so he seems a laggard spouse :
I'ld ne'er embark if my girl made such vows.

XLI

Pontice, quod numquam futuis, sed paelice laeua
Uteris et Veneri seruit amica manus,
Hoc nihil esse putas ? Scelus est, mihi crede, sed ingens,
Quantum uix animo concipis ipse tuo.
Nempe semel futuit, generaret Horatius ut tres ;
Mars semel, ut geminos Ilia casta daret.
Omnia perdiderat si masturbatus uterque
Mandasset manibus gaudia foeda suis.
Ipsam crede tibi naturam dicere rerum
'Istud quod digitis, Pontice, perdis, homo est.'

XLII

FOR STELLA, THAT HE MAY GAIN THE CONSULSHIP

For ever may Myrina's wealth be thine,
Phoebus, and swan-song give thee joy divine,
The Muses do thy will in loyal truth,
Thy Pythian priestess ever say thy sooth,
And may the Palace—glory far above
These lesser joys—still worship thee and love,
If thou wilt ask and Caesar grant thy plea,
The fasces for my Stella ; then to thee
Will I, thy debtor, build an altar fair
With rustic greenery, and offer there
A yearling steer bedecked with gilded horn ;
Delay no more, he is already born.

* XLIII

ON A STATUETTE OF HERCULES

This mighty god in shape of bronze so small,
Whose lion's skin upon the stones doth fall,
While to the stars he looks with upturned face
Holding in either hand a cup and mace,
No Roman work or fresh in fame is he,
Lysippus' gift and handicraft you see.
This god the board of Pella's monarch showed
Ere death came quickly in the world subdued;
By him young Hannibal at the altars swore;
He bade fierce Sulla to lay down his power.
Now from the threats of courts he holds aloof
And gladly dwells beneath a private roof,
And as of old he was Molorchus' guest,
So now the god with Vindex loves to rest.

XLIV

ON THE SAME

You know the Hercules that Vindex bought,
So fair is he that once I asked the god
Whose chisel, thus inspired, the statue wrought;
He laughed—that is his wont—and with a nod
Towards the base; 'Knowst thou not Greek?' says he,
'And thou a bard? His name yon letters tell!'
They said 'Lysippus' or my thought should be
That none but Pheidias could have wrought so well.

* XLV

TO MARCELLINUS IN THE CAUCASUS

A soldier you have borne the Getic sky,
And watched the sluggish Wain with careful eye,
But now you travel further from us still
Even to Prometheus and his storied hill.
How will you cry when those grim rocks you see,
Whereon he suffered—'Yet more hard was he.'
And then will add—'Who could such pains endure,
Was fit to mould the race of man, be sure.'

XLVI

THE MISER'S EXCUSE

WHAT is the use of Gellius saying
That he is building when he's laying
Door-mats or fitting keys and latches
Or changing window-panes and catches ?
Can any reason lie behind it ?
Ask for a loan and you will find it ;
It is the best of all excuses ;
To say ' I'm building ' has its uses.

XLVII

DEMOCRITOS, Zenonas inexplicitosque Platonas
  Quidquid et hirsutis squalet imaginibus,
Sic quasi Pythagorae loqueris successor et heres ;
  Praependet sane nec tibi barba minor :
Sed, quod et hircosis serum est et turpe pilosis,
  In molli rigidam clune libenter habes.
Tu, qui sectarum causas et pondera nosti,
  Dic mihi, percidi, Pannyche, dogma quod est ?

XLVIII

TO GARRICUS

A QUARTER of your goods you vowed to leave me,
And swore by all the gods you'd not deceive me ;
I thought you speaking truly when you said it,—
For who would doubt what he desires to credit ?—
So sent you gifts to foster your intentions ;
Amongst them was a boar of huge dimensions
Like Meleager's. Half the town you fêted
Till even greediest epicures were sated ;
Yet—who'd believe it ?—I was not invited,
No scraps of ribs or tail my gift requited ;
If not one single ounce of pig I merit,
What of the pounds I hoped I might inherit ?

* XLIX

ON HIS PARTHENIAN GOWN

This is the gown which my fond readers know,
For oft I've sung its praises. Long ago
It was a poet's gift, Parthenian hight,
And in it clothed I walked a splendid knight.
Then it was new and worthy of its giver,
Its glossy wool as shining as a river.
To-day the meanest pauper would decline,
To wear it, 'tis indeed so 'snow-flake fine.'
What will not time and length of days destroy?
Your once grand gown is now like you, my boy.

L

MINIATURES

My puny epigrams befit,
So you declare, my puny wit;
I am too stupid I admit
To wade like you in blood

Through twelve long books—my genius sets
T'wards finished marble statuettes,
The while your lofty soul begets
A giant built of mud.

* LI

ON THE DEATH OF LUCANUS

That which in his despite you sought from heaven,
To die before your brother, has been given.
But Tullus grudges you the Stygian shade
And in his elder's grave would fain be laid.
You dwell at peace in the Elysian zone,
Now first rejoicing that you are alone;
And if for Pollux Castor comes again,
You'll say—'Seek not high heaven to regain.'

LII

TO QUINTUS OVIDIUS ON HIS BIRTHDAY

I LOVE you, Quintus, and revere your birthday, holding it as dear,
Aye dearer than mine own ;
And if both March and April are marked in love's loyal calendar
With pearls and precious stone,
Your April I must rank above my March because one gave me love,
The other life alone.

LIII

TO THE SAME

QUINTUS, a little birthday gift I planned,
But you refuse and nothing will persuade you ;
Well, reconcile my wish and your command
By giving me the gift I should have made you.

* LIV

WITH A PRESENT OF FOWLS

IF I lived in Picenum and fattened field-fares,
Or a Sabine laid out in the woods my meshed snares :
If a fowler's long rod gained for me its light prey,
Or if birds on limed twigs were for me forced to stay,
Then, Carus, my kinship would give you your due ;
Neither brother nor grandsire should come before you.
As it is, o'er my fields only starlings take wing,
And finches and chattering sparrows in spring,
To the magpie's loud call my rough ploughman replies
And the ravening kite flies aloft to the skies.
So now these poor fowl from my farmyard I send :
Pray accept them and be my good kinsman and friend.

LV

THE RECIPIENT

ONE brace of birds for Stella, one for you,
Were ready for the ' Kinsman's feast ' to send,
When rose before my mind a clamorous crew
Of spectres, claiming each to be my friend ;
I cannot send to all, to give to two,
As I had purposed, might be to offend ;
So, to oblige all round and seem impartial,
I now propose to give both brace to Martial !

* LVI

THE VOYAGE

SPENDOPHORUS must on his lord attend
And soon to Libya his way will wend.
Give him, dear Love, a wand and those soft darts
Wherewith thou woundest eager lovers' hearts.
Cuirass and shield and helm I leave to thee,
He will be safe if naked he shall be,
E'en as Parthenopaeus felt no blow
From foemen's dart while they could see his brow.
But whomsoe'er he pierces straight will die
Of love—how happy in death's agony!
O beauty bright, from Africa come home
And grow to manhood here with us in Rome.

* LVII

COMPARISONS

THERE is nothing worn smoother than Hedylus' cloak:
Not the neck of a mule that has long known the yoke,
Not the handle of some old Corinthian jar,
Not the ramshackle wheel of a slow-moving car,
Not the leg that for ten years a fetter has borne,
Not the hoe that long usage in vineyards has worn,
Not pebbles nor ruts on our northern highway,
Not a pauper's wan toga who's seen his last day,
Not a bison's posterior scraped by the cage,
Not the tusk of a boar savage in his old age;
Yes, there is just one thing: and he will not deny it;
The place where he sits on's more smooth, if you try it.

LVIII

ON A LAKE TEMPLE BUILT BY SABINUS

QUEEN of the hallowed lake, with pious care
Sabinus built thy fane that shall endure,
And long may Umbrian hillmen worship there,
Thy townsmen never yield to Baiae's lure;
If these my timid books thy favour share
My Muse shall greet thee as her fountain pure.
Say'st thou, 'who gives his book to nymphs to keep
Must own their proper grave is in the deep'?

LIX

A GOOD CUSTOMER

About the Saepta shops Mamurra strolled
Where opulence may squander wealth untold,
And first he viewed fair slaves with gloating eyes,
Not those an open shop will advertise,
No, but the kind reserved for private view
Unseen by common folk like me and you ;
He then stripped table-tops of antique make
And ivories kept aloft for safety's sake.
That couch of tortoise-shell inlay was small
And would not fit his citron board at all ;
He tried Corinthian bronzes by their scent,
Thought Polycleitus' work indifferent,
And said the crystal vase was flawed—the two
Of agate he would mark, for they might do ;
Some bowls and ancient cups he took and weighed
As perfect gems as Mentor ever made,
Appraised the emeralds in enamel clear
And pearl-drops made to deck some snow-white ear,
Hunted for sardonyx through half the town
And tried to beat the price of jaspers down.
Then tired at nightfall, having ransacked Rome,
He bought two farthing crocks and took them home.

* LX

WITH A PRESENT OF FLOWERS

Bright garland, whether you from Paestum come,
Or Tibur or Praeneste is your home ;
Whether rich Tusculum your blossoms yields,
Or you give fame to fair Campanian fields ;
That for Sabinus you may have more charm,
Pretend you come from my Nomentan farm.

* LXI

ON A PLANE-TREE PLANTED BY JULIUS CAESAR IN SPAIN

In far Tartessus stands a house renowned,
Where rich Corduba Baetis woos in peace
And western sheep with living gold are crowned
Whose native ore makes pale the yellow fleece.

Within its midst is mighty Caesar's plane
Which as a shoot by his own hand was given.
It seems to know from whom its life began ;
So green it grows, so high it springs to heaven.

Oft drunken fauns have sported in its shade
And with their piping roused the house to fear,
Oft have its boughs concealed a Dryad maid
Who felt that Pan was in the darkness near.

The scent of Bacchic revels too it knows,
And thick have grown its leaves from spilth of wine,
While from red garlands fell the scattered rose,
And none could say of any bloom—' 'Twas mine.'

O dear to heaven, mighty Caesar's tree,
Fear not the fire, the sacrilegious knife ;
It was not Pompey's hand that planted thee,
Thy honours shall enjoy eternal life.

LXII

ON PHILAENIS

She flaunts in garments Tyrian dyed
By day and night as well,
'Tis not extravagance or pride,
Oh no—she likes the smell.

LXIII

ON PHOEBUS

'Tis strange that Phoebus dines night after night
With knaves whose deeds could never bear the light !

* LXIV

ON THE TEMPLE OF HERCULES-DOMITIAN

Our Caesar deigns to take Alcides' face
And with new shrine the Latin Road to grace,
Just where the traveller to Diana's home
Sees by the stone he is eight miles from Rome.
Here Hercules with vows and victims' blood
Was worshipped once : now there's a greater god
Whom men beseech for rank and wealth each day,
And from the other only trifles pray.

* LXV

ON THE SAME

ALCIDES, now as our fair Caesar seen,
Most welcome to the Latin Jove, I ween,
If such had been thy visage in men's sight
What time the monsters yielded to thy might,
They had not seen thee bear thy cruel thrall,
Nor as a slave to Argive monarch fall.
Ne'er hadst thou wool for Omphalë unwound,
Or viewed the Styx and the Tartarean hound ;
Eurystheus would have bowed to thy behest,
Nor Lichas brought the Centaur's guileful vest ;
Unvexed by Oeta thou hadst reached the heaven
Which by the pyre at last to thee was given.
Now Juno smiles, fair Hebë's love is thine,
And Nymphs before thee blush for their rapine.

LXVI

TO FABULLUS

ALTHOUGH your wife is young and fair,
You want a father's right to share,
  And that by legal fiction ;
But what you want of Caesar might
Be yours of ordinary right
  Beyond all contradiction.

LXVII

LASCIUAM tota possedi nocte puellam,
  Cuius nequitias uincere nulla potest.
Fessus mille modis illud puerile poposci :
  Ante preces totas primaque uerba dedit.
Inprobius quiddam ridensque rubensque rogaui :
  Pollicitast nulla luxuriosa mora.
Sed mihi pura fuit ; tibi non erit, Aeschyle, si uis
  Accipere hoc munus condicione mala.

LXVIII

TO A SCHOOLMASTER

Accursed Pedagogue, why plague me so ?
Your girls and boys abhor you—and no wonder—
Before the crested cocks begin to crow
Your savage howls and blows resound like thunder.

The clanging figure noisy blacksmiths fit
On a bronze horse with rivet and with hammer,
The howling mob that greets the favourite
In the arena cannot match your clamour.

A broken night is naught : to lie awake
The whole night through is really appalling ;
Shut up the school or tell me if you'll take
As much for silence as you get for bawling.

LXIX

Cum futuis, Polycharme, soles in fine cacare.
Cum pedicaris, quid, Polycharme, facis ?

LXX

TO CAECILIANUS

Of old ' O Times, O Manners,' Tully cried,
In Catiline's foul days with treason rife,
When swords were red with parricidal strife,
And mourning Rome with civic blood was dyed.
Why mock our times to-day, and why deride
Our manners ? Is not ours a happy life
That fears nor maddened chief nor murderous knife ?
No degradation this our age doth rue,
No leprous taint of shame—excepting you.

* LXXI

A STRANGE PARTNERSHIP

An African lion has partner become
With a jolly old ram, and they live in one home.
You may see them yourself, for together they're tied
And like trusty friends take their meals side by side.

They don't feed on acorns, nor does grass suffice ;
A tender young lamb seems to both very nice.
The Nemean terror and Hellë's old ram
Compared with these two were a fraud and a sham.
If a place in the stars should to creatures be given,
Our goat and our lion are worthy of heaven.

LXXII

TO THE BOXER LIBER

A CHAMPION in the craft that Pollux knew,
A Greek in skill, Roman in might and thew,
You share the name of Bacchus—yet 'tis true
That in the basket I received from you
No jar I found the viands to bedew
Of—you know what—your name should give the clue.

* LXXIII

ON A PARVENU COBBLER

WITH your teeth you were wont on old leather to bite,
And stretch out a sole that was mud-rotten quite,
But now you have got your dead patron's estate,
Who did not possess e'en a garret of late,
And in his bright crystal your hot drink enjoy
While you wanton at ease with his favourite boy.
Oh what a mistake that my fond parents taught
Me my letters, and tutors and schoolmasters sought!
If these are the profits from mending old shoes,
Good-bye books and pens, and adieu to the Muse.

LXXIV

ON A PORTRAIT OF CAMONIUS

HERE may we trace the aspect that he wore
  In childhood's hour, the bud but not the flower ;
His sire forbore to paint his manhood's grace,
  Lest evermore grief should renew her power
Standing before that loved and silent face.

LXXV

ON TUCCA'S BATH

No flint, no ashlar, here are seen,
No brick like that wherewith her Queen
  Built Babylon's great wall ;
It is of timber, planks, and lath,
This cooling room in Tucca's bath
  That is not cool at all ;
So closely all the timbers fit
That if he chose to sail in it
  'Twould make a perfect boat.
The hot room's rich with pillars wrought
By Phrygian quarrymen or brought
  From Afric lands remote,
Though Sparta sent her marbles rare,
Though rich Euboea's gems are there
  Perfect in hue and form,
'Tis always chill that marble tomb ;
O Tucca, use the cooling room
  To make the hot one warm.

* LXXVI

ON A PICTURE OF CAMONIUS IN CHILDHOOD

Behold, the young Camonius you see
As when he sported in his infancy.
In twenty years his face had manlier grown
And his fair cheeks were shadowed by a down
Whose darkness just had felt the barber's knife,
When jealous fate cut short his thin-spun life.
Far, far away he died ; and to his sire
Only came ashes from the funeral pyre.
So while this picture gives his childish face,
A later image in these lines I trace.

LXXVII

MUSIC WITH MEALS

Priscus describes with learned zest
The sort of feast he holds the best
In pages full of interest
  And erudition ;

But, if you ask my private view,
The best of all is that where you
Are not required to listen to
A damned musician.

LXXVIII

ON PICENTINUS' MARRIAGE WITH GALLA

Seven husbands she got,
Made away with the lot,
And has buried them all—but I know
That as you're number eight,
She has not long to wait
Before she rejoins them—below.

* LXXIX

ON DOMITIAN'S HOUSEHOLD

The servants once who stood at Caesar's board
In the proud palace were by Rome abhorred.
But now your men to all, Sire, are so dear
That our own households are our second care ;
So deferential are they and so kind,
Such modest calm in every face we find.
Each page takes pattern by his master's ways
And not his own, but Caesar's, mood displays.

* LXXX

A BAD BARGAIN

Poor John in his youth was so very sharp-set,
He married a grand dame for what he could get.
To-day he discovers there's plenty to do ;
For he has both to feed her and fondle her too.

LXXXI

ON AN ENVIOUS RIVAL

'Unpolished'—so that scribbler sneers,
While he that reads and he that hears,
Approve my little books;
I do not care a single jot,
My fame is for my guests and not
To please my rival cooks.

* LXXXII

A QUICK END

An astrologer said that you would not last long,
And I really imagine he was not far wrong,
For, wishing to leave not one penny behind,
In a year you have thrown your estate to the wind;
A very nice fortune you've managed to spend,
So I think we may say that you've had a quick end.

LXXXIII

ON A REFORM OF DOMITIAN'S

Fair were the pageants given in days of yore,
To Caesar owe we deeper obligations;
Our eyes confess they owe him much, far more
Our grateful ears—he banned the recitations!

* LXXXIV

TO NORBANUS

While for our lord with loyalty unstained
The rage of lawless foemen you restrained,
I who your love have e'er my glory made,
Was sporting safely in the Muses' shade.
But when to Rhaetia my poems came,
And the far north was busy with my name,
Never did you our friendship then deny
But 'He's my own, my comrade,' oft would cry.
Soon may the author read to your kind ears
All you have heard about in these six years.

LXXXV

THE SICK HOST

He is ill he states,
But he violates
  All medical orthodoxy,
And so to atone
He gorges alone
  And fasts as it were by proxy.
On the evidence
It is all pretence,
  So quickly the illness rose up ;
But I see it quite
In a serious light,
  For my dinner has turned its toes up !

* LXXXVI

ON THE DEATH OF SEVERUS

When Silius, twofold lord of Latin tongue,
The fate untimely of Severus sung,
I to the Muses made my mournful cry
And thus did great Apollo give reply—
'I wept for Linus, and Calliopë
Who stands hard by, has borne like grief with me.
Yea, cruel Fate has ventured e'en to move
With bitter grief the heart of either Jove,
The Thunderer in his Tarpeian shrine
And the great dweller on the Palatine.
Since then e'en they to fate relentless bow,
Forbear to charge the gods with envy now.'

LXXXVII

TO LUPERCUS

Seven goblets of Opimian, a bumper full was each,
I quaffed, and that will make a man a trifle thick of speech.
You chose this hour to come and say, 'My Nasta I have freed,
He was my father's servant, pray just sign and seal the deed.'
My seal is busy ; if you call to-morrow 'twill be right,
The seal upon a cork is all that it can mark to-night.

LXXXVIII

THE BREAKING-POINT

You used to send me gifts, now having won
My favour, as you think, you send me none ;
'Tis best to feed a captive now and then,
The boar ill-fed is like to force his den.

* LXXXIX

TO STELLA

Your guests must write you rhymes
Before they may fall to ;
It's very hard sometimes—
'Well, any stuff will do.'

XC

TO FLACCUS

In flowery meadows may you lie
With pebbly streamlets rippling by
Whose banks with blossoms are aglow ;
No care or sorrow may you know.
Cool be your cups of mellow wine
And sweet the chaplets that you twine.
Yours be a love who's all your own,
A maid who pines for you alone.
This, Flaccus, is mine earnest prayer,
But, friend, shun Cyprus and her glare
What time they thresh the parching grain
And flame doth glow in Leo's mane.
O Paphian Queen, my wish fulfil,
Restore the youth untouched of ill,
So hallowed shall thy Kalends be
And many a cake be offered thee
With gifts of frankincense and wine
Poured out before thy gleaming shrine.

* XCI

ON DOMITIAN'S BANQUETING-HALL

If I were called to diverse feasts above,
This way by Caesar and that way by Jove,
Though heaven were near, the palace far away,
These were the words that to the gods I'ld say—
'Seek some one else to be the Thunderer's guest.
I have my Jove on earth : *je suis, je reste.*'

XCII

TRUE SERVITUDE

'How easy live the free,' you say, and brood
Upon your long but easy servitude.
See Gaius tossing on his downy bed ;
Your sleep's unbroken tho' the couch be rude ;
He pays his call ere chilly dawn be red,
You need not call on him, you sleep instead ;
He's deep in debt, hears many a summons grim
From creditors that you need never dread,
You might be tortured at your master's whim ;
Far worse the gout that racks his every limb ;
Think of the morning qualms, his vicious moods,
Would you for thrice his freedom change with him ?

XCIII

A TOAST TO DOMITIAN

Pour out six measures from the older cask ;
Why dally so ? Nay, pour the deathless wine.
'What holy name has letters six, you ask,
Save Caesar' ? Aye my thought you can divine ;
So in my wreath ten lovely roses twine
For him the builder of the Flavian fane
And give me kisses ten to be a sign
That as a god Sarmaticus doth reign.

XCIV

TO A DOCTOR

To me 'tis filthy strychnine you dispense,
Then ask for wine! Why, damn your impudence!
In Homer, Glaucus for a crazy whim
Exchanges gold for bronze—am I like him?
Give a sweet draught to you and take instead
That bitter stuff? The fool is off his head.
Well take it then—but ere you drink it up
Pour a stiff dose of bromide in the cup!

* XCV (A)

ON A BACHELOR NEWLY WED

When Algernon Brown was a bachelor gay
He was put by the girls at the top of class A;
But his value has sadly decreased since he wed,
And now he appears at the bottom of Z.

* XCV (B)

ON THE SAME

You ask—'Has he any real name of his own,
This person you call Mr Algernon Brown'?
I'm damned if I know: call him Brown, my dear fellows:
I can't bear the blame of your friend's peccadilloes.

* XCVI

ON A DOCTOR

Doctor Herod when caught with a cup in his pocket
Said—'Wine does you harm; if you're wise, you will dock it.'

XCVII

JEALOUSY

With jealousy he's like to burst—
  What have I done to rouse him so—
Until he cracks with rage accurst ?
Rome reads my books—that is the worst
  Of all offence to him—and lo !
With jealousy he's like to burst ;
But other grudges he has nursed,
  I'm pointed out in street and show
Until he cracks with rage accurst
Because the grant is not reversed
  That Titus gave me long ago.
With jealousy he's like to burst,
Not yet my crimes are all rehearsed ;
  My house and farm annoy my foe
Until he cracks with rage accurst ;
He'd ban my friendships if he durst ;
  My dinners give him bitter woe ;
With jealousy he's like to burst.
Men love me, spite has not aspersed
  My fame—that makes his gall to flow
Until he cracks with rage accurst ;
He's near to bursting—*let him burst !*

XCVIII

THE LAST RESOURCE

All round the vintage failed ; upon the trade
  Ruin marched quick—the saving rain yet quicker :
Logwood and Company I hear have made
  A hundred hogsheads of their usual liquor.

* XCIX

TO ATTICUS

Antonius loves my humble verses, friend,
If to his letter we may credence lend ;
The glory of our wise Tolosa he,
Child of repose and bland felicity.

Go then, my book, and be of love a token
Whose strength by journeys long is never broken,
A trivial thing, if one should buy and give,
But from the author value you derive.
Great is the difference 'tween fountain-head
And water stagnant in a trough of lead.

C

TO BASSUS

THE feast you gave me cost but half a crown,
Yet I must call next day in proper trim
And walk before your chair through half the town
To call on ten old hags of aspect grim.
My toga's worn and shabby I admit,
But half a crown won't buy the like of it.

* CI

TO DOMITIAN-HERCULES

THOU Appian Way, of all our roads the queen,
Whom Caesar hallows as Alcides seen,
If thou wouldst know the toils of Hercules,
Hark to the tale and listen—they are these.
He killed the Libyan, won the fruit of gold,
And took her girdle from the Amazon bold ;
The lion and the Arcadian boar he slew,
Nor let the hydra's heads spring forth anew ;
The brazen stag, the birds of Stymphalus,
He drove away, from hell dragged Cerberus,
And to the Tiber Geryon's cattle brought :
These are the deeds the lesser hero wrought.
Now for the greater god : his exploits hear
Whom the sixth stone from Alba doth revere.
The Palatine he saved from ruthless lords
And for his god in boyhood crushed their swords.
Then when alone he'd gained the sovranty
He gave it up, consenting third to be.
Three times he's humbled northern Hister's brow,
And three times bathed his steeds in Getic snow,
And takes a victor's name from Arctic skies,
Albeit he scorns these easy victories.
Peace, morals, stars, divinities to heaven,
Temples to gods, and wreaths to Jove, he's given.
For him Alcides must too puny prove ;
Come now, our god ; appears as father Jove.

* CII

TO PHOEBUS

You return me my bond for four thousand : 'twere better
To lend me a thousand and leave me your debtor.
You must find some one else to oblige in that way ;
The money's my own which I cannot repay.

* CIII

ON TWO PAGE-BOYS

What Leda in another swan's embrace
Bore you these pages twain so like in face ?
In Hierus a Pollux we behold,
Asylus wears the mien of Castor bold,
And both have Helen's beauty. Had they been
In Sparta when small gifts made Venus queen,
Paris had cried—' No Tyndaris I need :
I choose instead this double Ganymede.'

BOOK TEN

I

PREFACE

Am I too big to suit your mind ?
Is ' finis ' long delayed ?
Read but few epigrams, and find
How short I can be made !
Choose the quatrains and couplets—see
The columns end with these—
For so a bulky tome may be
As little as you please.

* II

AN APOLOGY AS PREFACE

In too great haste I published Volume Ten :
Behold it here revised with careful pen.
Some things you'll recognise in their new dress,
But of the pieces most, you'll find, are fresh.
Be kind to both, dear reader ; for of old
Rome said to me—' Your readers are your gold.
By them the stream of Lethë you'll survive,
By them the better part of you will live.'
The wild fig splits Messalla's marbles through,
And Crispus' steeds are shattered quite in two :
But books are helped by time nor hurt by thieves,
Memorials that death uninjured leaves.

III

TO PRISCUS

Slaves' jargon, filthy venom, he doth spit,
The scenes of Billingsgate it might befit,
Pedlars who prowl the slums for broken glass
Would scorn to give a sulphur match for it.

He calls it mine to sully my repute,
The slinking knave is easy to refute ;
Would parrots copy quails, would Canus take
The squealing bagpipes for the mellow flute ?

Far from my books be that degraded fame,
They soar on jewelled wings unmarred of shame ;
'Twill cost me nothing if I hold my peace—
Then wherefore toil to win a sullied name ?

* IV

REAL LIFE

Ye folk, who read of Oedipus and Scylla and Medea
And King Thyestes in the dark, you'll find no wonders here.
What good to us are boys who lived in ages long by gone,
Parthenopaeus, Attis, and the drowsed Endymion,
Or ravished Hylas, or the lad who lost his pinions white,
Or he who hates the amorous stream, the young Hermaphrodite.
In silly fables such as these the foolish may delight,
But of this volume Life will say—' 'Tis mine '—and she'll be right.
No Centaurs here nor Gorgons nor fierce Harpies you will see ;
My pages have the savour of our own humanity ;
' To read about myself,' you say, ' is scarcely worth my while.'
Then turn to old Callimachus : you'll find him just your style.

V

THE SCANDAL-MONGER

May that proud knave, who in his loathly verses
The fame of noble dame and lord asperses,
Trudge through the slums outcast from every hovel,
From every haunt where clamorous beggars grovel ;
So may he crave the crusts of curs rejected,
Without a den to lurk in, unprotected ;
Through the long dripping winter may he quiver
'Mid endless biting blasts to make him shiver,
Acclaim as blest, and envy every mortal
Borne out to enter Orcus' gloomy portal ;
Long may he pray that lagging death may ease him,
And, when the thread is spun ere Pluto seize him,
Hear dogs that howl to gnaw his bones and tear them,
See carrion birds and wave his rags to scare them ;
And then may hell of suffering never purge him,
But Aeacus with bitter lashes scourge him,
With Sisyphus let him lie crushed and bleeding,
With Tantalus be parched 'mid waves receding,
Bear every pang that poets have reported ;
And when the furies have the truth extorted,
May conscience make more bitter all his curses,
And he confess ' 'twas I that wrote the verses.'

* VI

ON TRAJAN'S RETURN TO ROME

Ah happy they, whom Fortune grants to see
Our chief ablaze with northern pageantry.
When shall our maidens at their windows stand
And fill the Campus with their happy band ?
When shall all Rome on the Flaminian Way
See the dust rise that ends the dear delay ?
While knights and painted Moors and people cry—
' He comes, he comes '—as Caesar passes by.

VII

ON THE SAME

Each stream and Naiad fed on Northern snows,
O Rhine, to thee, the sire, her life blood owes ;
Henceforth unfettered be thy waters fair
That no barbarian wheel shall ever dare,
When thou art bound by frost, to traverse thee ;
If thou wouldst go thy way, thy banks made free,
And thou be Roman, thou must needs restore
Our Trajan to his folk and town once more.
His presence doth the royal Tiber need ;
Thine overlord is he, do thou give heed !

VIII

THE CONDITION

Though Paula wants to marry me,
That wealthy hag, I can't agree ;
I really do not think I could :
If she were older, then I would !

IX

POETIC FAME

I am a poet famed the wide world through
For measures Ovid and Catullus knew,
For merry wit and kindly—this I claim.
Yet envy not—A Derby winner's fame
Is greater ; mine of course must rank below it,
I am a poet.

* X

TO PAULUS

THOUGH your laurel-wreathed axes announce the new year
At a thousand levees every morn you appear.
What to us do you leave ? What in Rome can I do,
Who am one of the people, the poor vulgar crew ?
Shall I hail him as 'lord' who scarce gives me a glance ?
The greeting you give your proud honours enhance.
Shall I follow his chair ? You to bear it desire
And strive to go first through the thick of the mire.
Shall I rise to applaud him ? That chance you ne'er miss
And are standing already to throw him a kiss.
What shall poor fellows do whom no patron will own ?
Your consular purple has ousted our gown.

XI

TO CALLIODORUS

OF Theseus and Pirithous you rave
And boast yourself the peer of Pylades.
Hang me if you are fit to play the slave,
To clean a sty, or feed the swine for these !
You boast the thrice-turned coat, the loan you gave
Your friend to meet his need—Remember, please,
The heroes gave no doles, but shared their store ;
Whatever you may give you keep far more.

* XII

TO DOMITIUS

SOON upon the Aemilian Way you will go
And visit Vercellae and see the broad Po.
Deuce take it, I'm glad you are going, my friend,
Though upon you my days for enjoyment depend.
I shall miss you, but still it is worth it, I own :
For one summer you're free from the burden of Town.
Let your skin drink the sunlight in each greedy pore—
How handsome you'll grow on that far distant shore !
When you come back you'll seem quite a different man ;
We poor pallid townsfolk will envy your tan.
But though you be burned, as by Egypt's hot sun,
Stay a few weeks in Rome and that brown will be gone.

XIII

TO COTTA

A CARRIAGE bears your pampered horde along,
A Libyan toils behind to guard the throng,
Your rooms are strewn with couches everywhere,
You stain the very sea with unguents rare,
Fine vintages your crystal goblets crown,
And Venus lies not on a softer down ;
Yet at the threshold of a haughty fair
All night you lie—she heeds not tear or prayer—
Sighs rend your heart—I know beyond a doubt
What's wrong—you never learned to do without.

* XIV

THE PROOF OF FRIENDSHIP

YOU say you're my friend, but you never will lend
E'en a trifle : it's always 'No, No' !
Your coffers are brimming, your Nile-fields are swimming
With plenty, while I hungry go.
When winter draws nigh do you ever supply
Me with gown, or a fat present make ?
No proof can I find of your friendship but wind :
And that in my face you will break.

* XV

THE CAREFUL LOVER

FROM Cupid Afer stole a dart
And with it pierced a maiden's heart.
It's true her dowry fanned love's flame ;
But then friend Afer knows the game.

* XVI

TO GAIUS

IF 'promise' and 'give' mean exactly the same,
Though you never hand over, I'll play your own game.
Please accept all the ore of Asturia's mines
And the rich golden sand that old Tagus refines,

Accept all the pearls that in India rest,
And the wealth that the phoenix conceals in his nest,
Accept the wet purple that Tyrians store,
Accept all the world—but in promise, no more.

XVII

TO MACER

'Tis vain my Muse that you refuse your seasonable wit ;
And so to do is lawless too, since Macer asks for it ;
A quip, a jest will please him best—no solemn verses, pray—
For he complains your merry strains have ceased for many a day ;
Reports, indeed, he ought to read as guardian of the roads ;
O Appian Way, what will you say if he reads heavy odes ?

XVIII

ON MARIUS

He never entertains nor gives to any,
He never lends, he has not got a penny ;
Though barren his regard, men strive to win it ;—
Your toga, Rome, has many a fool within it.

* XIX

TO PLINY

Go now, my Muse, and take this screed
For learned Plinius to read :
It is not wise nor yet discreet
But still it has a spice of wit.
Short is the way ; just climb the height
Across Suburra till you sight
Spray-sprinkled Orpheus 'mid the throng
Of beasts enraptured with his song,
And by his side the eagle bold
That bore the boy to Jove of old,
And so to Pedo's modest home,
Its frieze bird graven, you will come.

But do not with strong liquor flown
Knock at a time that's not your own.
His days to study he must give,
Composing speeches that shall live
With Tully's best, to please the ears
And win a verdict from the Peers.
More safe 'twill be to go a-calling
If lamps are lit and night is falling.
That is your hour, when reigns the rose,
When brows are wet, and Bacchus flows ;
For when the Wine-god wildly rages
Stern Catos well may read my pages.

* XX

TO MANIUS

Dear Manius, comrade of my boyhood's years,
Than whom none dearer in the land of Spain,
No man more worthy of my love appears,
'Tis you who make me wish to see again
My native homesteads and the golden shore
That Celtiberian Salo washed of yore.

If you were with me I would be content
To dwell in Afric village parched and dry,
With you beside to share my banishment
I would endure the cold of Scythia's sky :
Yea, every place to us a Rome would be
Where every thought is shared 'twixt you and me.

XXI

THE PEDANT

Why should you choose to make your verse obscure ?
The most expert grammarians it amazes,
Till Bentley doubts and Porson is not sure
About the meaning of your crabbed phrases ;

No mortal can appreciate your style,
It needs the intellect of an Apollo ;
Think you that Virgil being clear is vile,
And Cinna nobler being hard to follow ?

Since in obscurity you put your trust,
If there be fame in that, your verse should win it ;
Mine is for men of taste—no Dry-as-dust
Need toil to extricate the meaning in it.

XXII

PRECAUTIONS

I SMEAR my lips with salve, my chin with plaster,
And yet, Philaenis, there is naught amiss ;
I only use them to avoid disaster ;
What do I apprehend, you say ?—A kiss.

XXIII

TO ANTONIUS PRIMUS ON HIS SEVENTY-FIFTH BIRTHDAY

THOSE five-and-seventy years now safely gone,
How happy is your quiet age, how dear
Are memory's pictures that you gaze upon,
You need not shrink, tho' Lethe's wave be near ;
The past has not a shade for you to fear,
No page of all its book you dread to con ;
Redoubled happiness and life hath he
Whose joy doth live again in memory.

* XXIV

ON HIS BIRTHDAY

DEAR first of March, my natal morn,
Fairest of days, when I was born,
Such gifts as I from maidens take,
This censer and this birthday-cake
I, fifty-seven now, do bring
To your high shrine as offering.
If it be well that I should live
Twice nine years more may heaven give ;
And then I will not ask for more,
But go still hale to Pluto's shore,
Rejoicing that three parts I'd run
Of life, before my days were done.

* XXV

A CIRCUS SCENE

If Mucius, when you saw him yesterday,
His hand within the fire boldly lay,
Seemed to you brave and valiant and strong,
Then to Abdera's people you belong.
For when the torturer says—' Thrust in your hand ',
The brave man's he who hears not the command.

XXVI

ON THE DEATH OF VARUS

Honoured of all but yesterday,
  Loved of his men and of Egypt's throng,
Now in a stranger land, the prey
  Of death, for his coming we vainly long ;
O'er that marble face we might not weep,
Not ours with perfume the pyre to steep ;
But the traitor Nile cannot take away
  The fame that lives in a deathless song.

* XXVII

TO DIODORUS

At your board on your birthday the senate reclines,
And many a knight in your company dines.
Each guest gets a crown when the banquet is done :
And yet people say you are nobody's son.

XXVIII

THE TEMPLE OF JANUS

Founder of time and all therein,
With thee our prayers and vows begin,
  Janus, thou glorious god,
Too mean of yore was thine abode,
For through thine arch as by a road
  Rome's hurrying myriads trod ;

Where'er thy fourfold face doth turn
A forum now mayst thou discern ;
Thy shrine may none profane.
For Caesar's gift, a boon so great,
Keeps fast for aye thine iron gate
In sign that peace doth reign.

XXIX

TO SEXTILIANUS

On Saturn's feast you used to send
Me plate, but now my luck is dead,
You give it to your lady friends
Instead.

My natal day no toga brought,
That customary gift you dock
Because the price of it has bought
Her frock.

How cheap is she, that lady gay,
For not a penny you have lost ;
You win her favour and *I* pay
The cost.

XXX

A VILLA AT FORMIAE

Sweet Formiae, the pleasant home
Apollinaris loveth well,
Released from all the cares of Rome
'Tis here that he would choose to dwell ;
Tibur his heart cannot beguile
Though there his loving spouse was born ;
He seeks not Circe's witching isle,
Praneste, Antium, he doth scorn ;
Though fair be Tusculum's retreat,
And Caieta has ancient fame,
Though Liris' gentle stream be sweet,
His fealty they cannot claim ;
He chooses not thy cooling shade,
Marica, and he would forsake
The fountain of the water-maid
Who plunges in the Lucrine lake ;

Here is no stagnant sea or air
The deep, a living thing, exhales,
Soft breath to toy with Thais' hair
And gently fill the painted sails ;
How lightly here the Zephyrs play,
As though a maiden's dainty hand
The heat of summer to allay,
Her loveliness had softly fanned ;
Not far the fisher needs to roam,
But in the waters clear and still
Beneath the casement of his home
May watch and take his prey at will ;
And here though Aeolus should rave,
The table lacks not dainty fare ;
The fish-pool fears no angry wave,
Pike, mullet, lampreys all are there,
Home-bred its denizens and tame
Huge mullets here and barbel swim,
Whose keeper knows them all by name
And at his call they come to him ;
Their lord, alas, through all the year
From city toil is seldom free,
Few days, O Rome, thou givest him here,
How many he must give to thee ;
Oh happy they who may abide
In this fair place although in thrall ;
These pleasures doth their lord provide,
His servants have the joy of all.

XXXI

TO CALLIODORUS

When yesterday you sold a slave and spent
On one luxurious feast the price he brought,
How foul that feast ; the mullet that you bought,
Its very crown and pride, to all intent
Was not a fish, and thus we brand your greed—
Ah, loathly wretch, on human life you feed.

* XXXII

ON A PORTRAIT

You ask whose lineaments this picture shows,
Which now I deck with violet and rose.
Here stands Antonius in his youthful prime
Who thus in age still knows his manhood's time.
Ah would thus pictured we his mind could see !
No painting to the world more fair would be.

XXXIII

TO MUNATIUS GALLUS

SIMPLER than Sabines in their golden age,
In virtue loftier than the Attic sage,
My loyal friend, may Venus grant thee this,
That, through thy lovely daughter's wedded bliss,
Thy union with a house of ancient fame
Endure for ever, so thou clear my name
That foul malevolence has dared asperse ;
If any say I wrote that poisoned verse,
Do thou reply as often thou hast said,
' None writes like that whose verse is ever read.'
My Muse speaks never ill of any man ;
'Tis but their vices lie beneath her ban.

* XXXIV

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN

MAY the gods grant thee, Sire, thy due reward,
Who dost the rights of injured patrons guard.
That they should not by freedmen exiled be,
And make thee blessed for perpetuity.
But clients also know thee for their friend
Prepared to their just claims thy help to lend.
Thou dost deserve, and hast, the power to aid :
May it be thine to prove these words I've said.

* XXXV

THE POET SULPICIA

YE wives, Sulpicia's pages scan,
Who wish to please one only man :
Ye husbands, read Sulpicia too,
Who wish one only bride to woo.
She tells not of Medea's rages ;
Scylla and Byblis in her pages
Have no existence, in the least,
Nor yet Thyestes' direful feast ;
She tells of love that's pure and good,
Where wit meets mirth in happy mood,

And honest critics well may say
None is more modest, none more gay.
E'en so Egeria, well I wot,
Would jest with Numa in her grot.
Had Sappho her as teacher seen,
More wise, more modest, she had been ;
Though were she set by Sappho's side
Phaon would choose her for his bride ;
Yet all in vain : she would not follow
Jupiter, Bacchus, or Apollo
To be their mate, or live one day
If her Calenus passed away.

XXXVI

TO MUNNA

You search the vaults of Gaul for doctored wine,
Jars mellowed (save the mark !) in smoky heat,
Across the sea this poison you consign
At vast expense your luckless friends to cheat ;
The price of it would buy Falernian sweet,
With this would Setine vineyards be content,
And far from home you work lest you should meet
And have to drink the filthy wine you sent.

XXXVII

TO MATERNUS

Honest of speech by your skill you reign
Unchallenged lord of the Courts of Rome ;
Your friend and comrade is going home,
Have you any commands for the Spanish main ?

Is it better to catch foul frogs or bait
For worthless sticklebacks here or there,
To throw again to his rocky lair
The mullet of less than three pounds' weight ?

Of tasteless mussels a feast you make,
And think dwarfed cockles are dainty fare,
Whilst Baiae envies the oysters there,
And even the slaves a share may take.

Which is the better, a fox to snare
That wounds your hounds with his poisoned teeth,
Or to draw full nets from the deeps beneath
And set them again for a leaping hare ?

Here is your keeper—he looks quite vain
Having caught a badger—oh dainty dish !
You dwell by the coast, Rome sends you fish,
Have you any commands for the Spanish main ?

* XXXVIII

CALENUS AND SULPICIA

For fifteen years, Calenus, by your side,
Sulpicia has lived, a blooming bride.
O nights of bliss, whose each immortal hour
Is marked by pearls from distant India's shore.
What conflicts and what rivalry of love
Has your bed witnessed and the lamp above !
These fifteen years alone you hold as life,
Nor count the days before you had a wife.
For if kind Fate would turn again the page
One day surpasses four times Nestor's age.

XXXIX

THE OLD SERPENT

Lesbia, in owning you were born
When Charles was King, you are forsworn ;
And if 'twas Charles Martel you meant,
You lie again : it's evident
That one with your experience must
Have sprung with Adam from the dust !

* XL

INNOCENT AMUSEMENTS

I was told that my Polla had taken a fancy
To intimate talks all alone with a Nancy.
I ventured upon them one evening to call,
And I found that he was not a Nancy at all.

XLI

TO PROCULEIA

You left your honoured spouse on New Year's day
And claimed your dowry back ; what sudden strain
Has burst the bond ? What is the quarrel pray ?
I know the reason you will not explain ;
His proper state as Praetor to maintain
A thousand pounds or so he must disburse,
However meanly done be Rhea's show ;
And on the public games to make it worse
Two hundred more—no matrimonial woe
You urge, but fear that he should wrong your purse.

* XLII

TO DINDYMUS

So soft on your cheeks is the shadowy down
That it fades with a breath in the breeze or the sun.
Such a delicate bloom as on quinces oft lingers
That shine when they're plucked by a maiden's soft fingers.
And if too repeated my kisses I press
On your lips, a new beard springs up from my caress.

XLIII

A PRODUCTIVE ESTATE

Seven wives you've had and all of them lie buried in your field ;
I don't suppose that any land could boast more rich a yield.

* XLIV

TO QUINTUS OVIDIUS

Dear Ovid, who to Caledonia's snow
And Tethys and old Ocean now must go,
Leaving Nomentum and King Numa's heights
And that warm hearth in which your age delights,

Fate cannot be differred though pleasure may,
Her threads to your account each moment pay.
So when you've shown, your comrade dear to please,
That you prefer your promise to your ease,
Then to your Sabine farm your presence lend
And count yourself your own most precious friend.

XLV

PERVERTED TASTE

The graceful tributes of my verse,
My tender lyrics, you asperse ;
Too suave and soft their tone ;
And, like a mongrel cur, eschew
The dainties that I offer you,
And choose to gnaw a bone ;
For liquor sour in taste and scent
Go seek elsewhere, for mine is meant
For cultured taste alone.

* XLVI

TO MATHO

You must always be witty : 'twere better, you know,
To blend good and bad with the just so-and-so.

* XLVII

THE HAPPY LIFE

The things that make a happy life,
My genial friend, are these :
A quiet dwelling free from strife,
Health, strength, a mind at ease ;
Money bequeathed, not hardly won,
A blazing fire when work is done.

Ingenuous prudence, equal friends,
Bright talk and simple fare,
A farm that crops ungrudging lends,
Soberness free from care,
A wife who's chaste yet fond of sport,
And sleep that makes the night seem short.

With what you are be satisfied,
Nor let ambition range ;
Contented still whate'er betide
And caring naught for change.
Pray not for death, nor yet feel fear
When the last hour of life draws near.

XLVIII

THE INVITATION

The priests proclaim the hour at Isis' shrine,
When guard is changed 'tis time to bathe and dine ;
Cool are the baths too hot an hour ago,
At the sixth hour with Nero's heat they glow ;
Friends, are you ready ? There are five of you,
My horse-shoe couch holds seven—Bring Lupus, too.
My bailiff's wife has gathered mallows light
And garden treasures for the feast to-night.
Sliced leeks there are, dwarf lettuce cool and smooth,
Rocket to stimulate and mint to soothe,
Anchovies crowned with egg and dressed with rue,
And pickled pork with tunny wine, will do
To whet the appetite, and following these
A kid the ravening wolf had hoped to seize,
Rissoles that need no carving-knife are there,
Spring cabbages and beans—the labourer's fare,
A fowl, a ham that twice has served : and last
Sweet apples come to crown the whole repast.
Then as to home-grown wine, I know 'tis clear,
Free from all crust, for it was made this year ;
Gay jest and kindly wit shall this beget
With naught to bring repentance or regret ;
Safely we'll gossip of the racing season,
The cup shall stir no guest of mine to treason.

XLIX

TO COTTA

In cups of amethystine hue
Was rich Opimian poured for you,
'Twas common Sabine raw and new
You gave to me, and said,
' Wilt have a cup of gold for it ' ?
No, I will not, for I submit
A golden cup is hardly fit
For drink as dull as lead.

L

ON THE DEATH OF THE CHARIOTEER, SCORPUS

Break, Victory, the palm of thy renown,
Let Favour smite her naked breast, and Fame
Don sorrow's garb ; let Glory cast the crown
That decked her tresses to the cruel flame ;
Robbed of his youthful prime—ah deed of shame—
The grim black steeds doth Scorpus yoke : of yore
Swiftly he drove, swift to the goal he came,
Too swiftly now his race of life is o'er.

LI

THE JOYS OF SPRING

The Bull looks backwards on the Ram, for now
The changing twins have stilled the winter's breath :
The meadow smiles and green is every bough,
And Philomel doth wail for Itys' death.

My busy friend, for thee calm joy is banned,
Ah for the sunshine and ungirdled ease,
The groves, the water-springs, the shining sand,
With Anxur bright above the dancing seas.

Ah for the couch from which on either side
Thou seest the boats at sea, or in the port
Or on the stream, for here thou canst deride
Rome's baths, and theatres and wrangling court,

And here no gleaming temple soars aloft,
Here hath the Thunderer no towering shrine ;
Now tired thou sayest—methinks I hear thee oft—
'Rome keep thine own but let my life be mine.'

LII

Theylin uiderat in toga spadonem,
Damnatum Numa dixit esse moecham.

LIII

ON THE DEATH OF SCORPUS

SCORPUS am I, the charioteer
Who gained a glorious name,
The noisy circus held me dear,
But ah, how brief my fame !
At twenty-seven my course was done,
For Lachesis, cajoled
By counting up the palms I won,
Had thought that I was old.

* LIV

TO OLUS

YOUR close-sheeted tables may be very fine,
But, if you cannot see them, so likewise are mine.

LV

ARRECTUM quotiens Marulla penem
Pensauit digitis diuque mensa est,
Libras scripula sextulasque dicit ;
Idem post opus et suas palaestras
Loro cum similis iacet remisso,
Quanto sit leuior Marulla dicit.
Non ergo est manus ista, sed statera.

LVI

TO GALLUS

I WAIT on you all day, my home forsaking,
Thrice climb the Aventine tho' great the height is ;
Now A can stop or draw a tooth that's aching,
And B perhaps may heal conjunctivitis,
To deal with scars is C's sole undertaking,
While D can cure a case of tonsilitis ;
Had I a hernia to E you'd send me ;
But I'm a total wreck—and who can mend me ?

* LVII

TO SEXTUS

EIGHT ounces of pepper! I'm sorry to state,
Instead of a pound of good bright silver-plate.
I will not disparage your kindness, my lord:
But pepper, at that price, I cannot afford.

* LVIII

TO FAUSTINUS

A CALM retreat by Anxur's sparkling foam,
A nearer Baiae, and a seaside home,
A wood cicadas could not noisy make
In the hot summer, and a river lake;
While these were mine, with you the Muse I wooed;
But now great Rome consumes my solitude.
I toil in vain, no day is here my own,
Tossed like a mariner on the waves of Town,
While my suburban acres I maintain
And humble dwelling near Quirinus' fane.
But there are other ways to show regard
Than lounging at your levees, and a bard
Must never waste a moment; yet I swear,
Though I neglect them, you I hold most dear.

LIX

TO A DAINTY CRITIC

YOU like the shortest poems, not the best,
'Tis those you always read—and skip the rest;
I spread a varied banquet for your taste,
You take made dishes and the rest you waste.
And wrong your appetite, for truth to tell
A satisfying meal needs bread as well.

LX

ON MUNNA

MUNNA has asked the right for children three,
Two boys he has—a schoolmaster is he.

LXI

EROTION'S GRAVE

HERE sleeps the body of the little maid,
Erotion,
Ere her sixth winter fate had called her shade
To hasten on ;
Whoe'er thou art who after me shall own
This tiny plot,
Lay year by year the dues upon her stone ;
Forget her not.
So shall thy house endure nor suffering know,
And this remain
The only sign and monument of woe
On thy domain.

* LXII

TO A SCHOOLMASTER

GOOD schoolmaster, pray give your classes a rest.
If you do, I will ask that next term you be pressed
By curly-haired boys flocking close to your table,
And no short-hand clerk or quick counter be able
To boast that he has a more studious crew
Of pupils and fonder of teacher than you.
The hot sunny days are upon us again,
And blazing July burns the ripening grain,
So let your grim rod and your whip, put to sleep,
Till the Ides of October a holiday keep.
In summer if children can only stay well,
They learn quite enough and can rest for a spell.

LXIII

ON A MATRON'S GRAVE

GREAT is mine honour, tho' my tomb be small ;
No marble pile, no pyramid you see.
Twice I beheld Tarentum's festival,
And lived a long life through from sorrow free ;
Five sons, five daughters, Juno granted me,
And all survived to hear my latest breath.
High glory seldom won I gained—for he
I loved was mine, I his alone till death.

* LXIV

TO POLLA, WIFE OF LUCAN

Dear lady, if you read this little book,
Do not with frowns upon my jesting look.
He, your own bard, our Muse's chiefest glory,
When on Pierian trump he sang war's story,
Was not ashamed to write in playful strain—
'If I'm no Ganymede, why here remain?'

LXV

TO CHARMENION

You are from Corinth—loathly den
And I a Spanish citizen
From Tagus' land, I wonder then
That you should call me 'brother';
While you are decked with tresses fair
And smooth your limbs with daily care,
I have the Spaniard's shaggy hair;
Are we like one another?

You lisp and squeak, I far prefer
My baby's tone as manlier;
Are pigeons like to eagles, Sir?
Pray cease my ears to blister
With such endearments; it is plain
Kids cannot wear the lion's mane;
Just call me 'brother' once again,
And I will call you 'sister'.

* LXVI

TO THE PAGE, THEOPOMPUS

Who pray could be so harsh, so proud of look
As to declare that you should be a cook?
Could any man endure your face to shame
With soot, or mar your hair with greasy flame?
Who in your place will hold the crystal glass,
Or with more grace the old Falernian pass?
If fates like this you angel boys attend,
Ganymede too will in the kitchen end.

LXVII

ON AN OLD WOMAN'S GRAVE

She saw the flood in Noah's time,
To Cush she acted foster-mother,
But she was rather past her prime
When Milcah flourished and her brother ;
With reverence seemly in a sage
Old Abram spoke of her as ' Granny ',
And it was in her middle age
That Isaac loved to call her ' Nanny '.
No hoary crow her years surpassed,
But still a mate we don't deny her :
Here lies she—amorous to the last—
With Jacob's oldest shepherd by her.

* LXVIII

TO A LADY WHO APES FOREIGN FASHIONS

You were not born in Paris nor yet Armentieres,
And you live in a flat near Park Lane, it appears.
Your father I know was a native of Thame,
And your simple old mother from Somerset came ;
Yet though you're as English as honest Queen Bess,
As ' chéri ' and ' mon chou ' all your men you address.
A couch is the place for such phrases as these,
When a maiden is anxious her lover to please.
Perhaps you would learn like our matrons to speak,
And ways of allurement to win lovers seek ?
Well, though you may practise the tricks of Paree,
You will never a Madame de Pompadour be.

* LXIX

THE BREECHES-WEARER

When a wife keeps her man under close lock and key
And herself goes wherever she will ;
I think in this case every one will agree
That Jack is the lady not Jill.

LXX

TO POTITUS

In twelve whole months one book I hardly finished,
So you declare my industry too small;
What hours have I by trouble undiminished?
The wonder is that I should write at all.

Ere dawn I call on patrons who ignore me,
To wish them all the luck that's never mine;
Then social care and business come to bore me,
To seal some deed I scale the Aventine;

The Consul or the Praetor may detain me,
Or I am caught in their attendant throng,
Often a dismal poet will constrain me
To hear his wretched verses all day long;

If men of law or critics have waylaid me
With some request, I dare not say them nay;
And when at weary eve my dole is paid me
What time is left for writing verses pray?

* LXXI

AN EPITAPH: IN DEATH UNITED

Whoe'er thou art who dost for parents pray
A late and happy end, one moment stay
And read the record on this tomb engraved,
Wherein Rabirius in death has laid
His father and his mother. They together
Lived sixty years through fair and stormy weather,
And then together died without regret,
While on one pyre their bodies both were set.
And yet Rabirius unconsoled doth mourn
As though from him they were untimely torn.

LXXII

THE NEW REGIME

Go smooth-lipped flatteries; this verse of mine
Is now made free. I need no more abase
My Muse, nor call our chief a 'Lord Divine',
Henceforth in Rome have ye no resting-place.

Seek the bedizened Persian King who craves
Abjects about his jewelled feet to crawl ;
Here Trajan rules, no lord of grovelling slaves,
A senator, most righteous of them all ;

From death to life is rugged truth restored,
And here in simple grandeur reigneth she ;
O Rome, be wise—forget the words abhorred
That tyranny aforetime wrung from thee !

* LXXIII

TO MARCUS

A WELCOME pledge your letter brings, I own,
The formal gift of an Italian gown ;
Not such a one as old Fabricius wore,
But such as gay Maecenas donned of yore.
Less precious were it from another hand—
Not every victim heaven can command—
But sent from you I must the name approve,
E'en if the gift itself I did not love ;
And more than gift and name do I commend
The kindly judgment of my learned friend.

LXXIV

REPOSE

SPARE me, for I am tired with labour long
And social calls ; O Rome, thou canst discern it ;
Still must I toil amid the clients' throng
For one half-crown, and spend all day to earn it.

Great sacks of gold the charioteer reward,
It takes him but a single hour to win them ;
My little books demand no golden hoard,
For well they know how little there is in them.

I do not ask Apulian fields to till,
Hybla's or Egypt's wealth that none may number,
Or vineyards rich that crown the Setine hill ;
The greater boon I ask is merely slumber !

* LXXV

THE CLIMAX

With Galla it once was—' Two hundred, mon cher '—
And I will confess it, she did not seem dear.
A year passed away, and one hundred seemed more,
When she sank to that figure, than two had before.
Another half-year and 'twas—' Twenty I'll make it ' :
I offered her ten, but she said—' I can't take it '.
Two or three months went by and I got a short note—
' Five pounds I am asking '—the good lady wrote.
I did not respond, so she came to a pound,
And even a sovereign too much I found.
When we met the next time, she was willing to have
The paltry half-crown I had given my slave.
Do you think she was able much lower to go ?
Yes. ' Take me for nothing '. My answer was—' No '.

LXXVI

THE POET'S REWARD

Now, Fortune, is this fair in you ?
Here's one, no Parthian or Jew,
No abject slave, re-made as knight,
But Roman both by blood and right ;
Learned in Greek and Latin, kind,
A trustier friend were hard to find—
Yet he was shivering, while in scarlet
Mule-drivers flaunt. You say ' the varlet
Is guilty of a crime ' ? I know it ;
A sad one too—*he is a poet.*

LXXVII

ON CARUS

Carus is dead ; the infamous deceiver ;
To crown his many crimes he died of fever !
That fever too was cruel and malignant,
It should have been a quartan, more benignant ;
For had it brought the germs of that to fill him,
He might have lived to let the doctor kill him.

* LXXVIII

TO MACER

To far Salonae now your way you wend,
Whom loyalty and love of right attend,
And power that never seeks its purse to fill,
But has fair virtue for its handmaid still.
O happy dwellers in that golden land,
Your ruler will return with empty hand,
And you with tearful joy on his last day
Will seek pretexts to make him longer stay.
But I, who long to see you once again,
Go now my way to Gaul, and savage Spain:
But on each page from Tagus' wave I write,
My pen shall Macer's honoured name indite.
And so when you peruse the bards of old,
May I a favoured place among them hold,
And of that goodly band of poets see
None save Catullus taken before me.

* LXXIX

THE RIVALS

Torquatus acquired a mansion near town;
Otacilius at once bought a plot for his own.
Torquatus built baths that with marble shine bright;
Otacilius set up a bath-pot that night.
Torquatus laid out laurel-groves for his ease;
Otacilius planted a hundred nut-trees.
When Torquatus was consul, the other became
A town mayor, and thought that the posts were the same.
Like the frog in the fable who puffed till he burst,
Otacilius won't let Torquatus be first.

LXXX

THE CONNOISSEUR

When Eros weeps in blank despair
To see a cup of Myrrine ware,
Fair slaves, a citrus table-top,
The very pick of all the shop,

And groans for bitterness to spy them
Because, poor wretch, he cannot buy them,
You laugh and jeer to hear him sigh,
Good onlooker, whose eyes are dry!
Though envious tears your soul bedew,
Is he a greater fool than you?

LXXXI

Cum duo uenissent ad Phyllida mane fututum
Et nudam cuperet sumere uterque prior,
Promisit pariter se Phyllis utrique daturam,
Et dedit: ille pedem sustulit, hic tunicam.

LXXXII

TO GALLUS

If in my suffering any good you find,
I'll call at dawn or midnight, nor complain,
Nipped by the bitter blast of freezing wind,
Endure the snow and brave the chilling rain;
But not a single farthing you can gain,
And I must bear a tortured slave's distress—
Oh spare a weary wight the wanton pain
That racks him and to you is profitless!

* LXXXIII

TO MARINUS

You scrape a few hairs from the side of your head,
So that over your bare-shining baldness they spread;
But blown by the wind they return to their place
And with two big curls your poor naked poll grace.
You'ld think that we had old Silenus in sight
Between young Adonis and Hermaphrodite.
Confess your old age and leave all your head bare:
There's nothing more ugly than bald men with hair.

LXXXIV

THE BEDFELLOW

He sits up late, you think it odd demeanour?
Think of his wife! Good heavens, have you seen her?

LXXXV

A PARADOX

An ancient boatman bought a plot of ground
Beside the stream where he had plied his calling,
But Tiber's winter flood rose quickly round
The field, and threatened ruin most appalling ;
And so with stones he filled his useless boat
Which, now a dam, averted inundation.
Strange miracle ! a craft that would not float
Has proved a troubled mariner's salvation !

LXXXVI

THE ARCHER

Young Laurus with unerring aim
Strove eagerly to capture fame.
So much he loved the butts that he,
Old and retired, a butt must be !

LXXXVII

ON THE BIRTHDAY OF RESTITUTUS

Thy pious duty Rome fulfil,
In prayer and silence greet the morn,
Ye wrangling courts, your clamour still,
To-day your orator was born ;
The trash a pauper client lays
Before his lord for offering
May wait for Saturn's merry days,
Ye rich, your choicest treasure bring ;
Proud huckster from Agrippa's street
Send him a cloak of Tyrian hue,
Gay reveller, a robe should greet
The counsel who defended you.
Oh wronged but now triumphant dame,
Bring gems to him, no glittering paste ;
And, antiquary, he doth claim
Silver that Phidias' chisel chased ;
From hind or hunter, kid or hare,
From fisher, treasure of the sea,
If each a fitting gift must bear,
What should the poet's offering be ?

* LXXXVIII

A PICKER UP OF TRIFLES

BEFORE the sittings have begun
Friend Cotta into court will run,
And every judge's notice scan.
He is indeed a busy man !

LXXXIX

ON THE HERA OF POLYCLEITUS

How glorious the Hera who hath brought
To Polycleitus an undying fame,
The perfect loveliness his hand hath wrought
Phidias the master might have longed to claim.
On Ida's mount the shepherd, free of blame,
Had crowned her as the fairest ever seen ;
Aye, she had set the heart of Zeus aflame
Had he not loved his sister and his Queen.

XC

QUID uellis uetulum, Ligeia, cunnum ?
Quid busti cineres tui lacessis ?
Tales munditiae decent puellas
(Nam tu iam nec anus potes uideri) ;
Istud, crede mihi, Ligeia, belle
Non mater facit Hectoris, sed uxor.
Erras si tibi cunnus hic uidetur,
Ad quem mentula pertinere desit.
Quare si pudor est, Ligeia, noli
Barbam uellere mortuo leoni.

XCI

OMNES eunuchos habet Almo nec arrigit ipse :
Et queritur pariat quod sua Polla nihil.

XCII

TO MARIUS

Atina boasts you are her son, but here
Oft have you shared my peace and hold it dear.
Guard my twin pines, the glory of the glade,
And the holm-oaks, for Faunus loves their shade ;
Here doth the lord of Thunder's altar stand,
Built rudely by my bailiff's rustic hand,
With one to wild Silvanus by its side
Which blood of lamb and kid has often dyed ;
Diana rules the little shrine you see,
And Mars is there, his sister's guest, for he
Is patron of my month. Keep this, I pray,
And likewise tender Flora's grove of bay,
Her refuge when Priapus doth pursue ;
Pay sacrifice to all in order due,
And when the kindly gods you recompense
With offerings of blood and frankincense,
Speak thus :—' Though far away doth Martial dwell,
Wherever he may be, he loves you well ;
Think he is here to share my pious task,
And grant us both whatever boon we ask '.

XCIII

TO CLEMENS

If Padua should greet your eyes
Ere yet I may behold her,
Where from the spreading plains arise
The vine-clad hills to fold her,

My songs to your Sabina bear,
No reader yet has conned them ;
Proudly their purple robe they wear
But only now have donned them ;

How fair the earliest roses look,
With rapture we regard them !
Fair the fresh pages of a book
Ere any touch has marred them.

XCIV

WITH A BASKET OF APPLES

Not like Pheacia's are my trees,
No guardian dragons turn about them ;
Nomentum has no need of these,
Her orchards are secure without them.

The prowling thieves my fruits eschew,
For all the season through they harden.
The autumn spoils I send to you
Were harvested in Covent Garden !

XCV

Infantem tibi uir, tibi, Galla remisit adulter.
Hi, puto, non dubie se futuisse negant.

* XCVI

TO AVITUS

You wonder why I, who in Rome have grown old,
Should still yearn for Salo and Tagus' rich gold,
And ever of far-distant lands sing the charms,
Desiring the fields of their opulent farms.
Well, I long for the place where a little supplies
All you need, and each cottage contains luxuries.
Here a farm means expense, there its owner it pays ;
Here a poor stingy fire, but there a bright blaze.
Here hunger costs money and shops your purse drain ;
There your table is stocked from your own rich domain.
Here four or more gowns in one summer wear through
There one will suffice for four autumns to go.
Fie then on your patrons. The country affords
Such wealth as you ne'er will obtain from proud lords.

XCVII

DISAPPOINTMENT

Now all was done—the funeral pyre
Was built and ready for the fire ;
His wife—fast fell the tears from her—
Had bought the spices and the myrrh ;

Bier, urn, and grave were ready too,
And bearers all in order due ;
At the last gasp old Numa still
Had just the strength to sign his will
With me as heir—then back he fell—
And died ? Oh no, he got quite well !

* XCVIII

TO PUBLIUS

When your page is more wanton than young Ganymede,
And is far better dressed, as by all is agreed,
Than your sister or wife or your daughter or mother,
As they lie on the couches beside one another ;
Do you want me instead at your ivories to stare,
Or seem for your lamps and your tables to care.
If you don't want to think of your guests any harm,
Let the pages who serve us be fresh from the farm,
Unkempt, underhung, without manners at table,
The sons of your herd reeking still of the stable.
Your tastes are betrayed by the look in your eyes ;
For minions and morals do not harmonise.

* XCIX

ON A PORTRAIT OF JULIUS RUFUS PREFIXED TO HIS 'SATIRES'

Had Socrates a Roman been,
As Julius Rufus here he's seen.

C

ON A PLAGIARIST

To mix with yours my verse you steal,
The knavish trick is far from deft ;
The easy contrast will reveal
The theft.

Think you a lion's lordly roar
Resembles the hyena's howl,
Or would you with the eagle soar,
Poor owl ?

Had you one wooden leg, and one
Endowed with Ladas' might of limb
Do you suppose that you could run
Like him ?

* CI

ON THE PROFESSIONAL WIT, CAPITOLINUS

If old Galba, once so happy with Augustus as his lord,
Were to us from his Elysium for a day to be restored,
And against Capitolinus now a jesting-match should try,
' Boorish Galba, cease your fooling '—all the audience would cry.

CII

THE WONDERS OF NATURE

A and his wife long years have lived apart,
And now that wife has given him a son.
Well, B can match that miracle in art ;
He *fathers* verse, but has *begotten* none.

* CIII

TO HIS FELLOW-TOWNSMEN

Ye sons of Bilbilis, beneath whose walls
The rushing Salo leaps and foams and falls,
My fellow-townsmen, do you take delight
In your bard's verses, and his glory bright ?
Be sure I am your honour and your fame,
And that Verona owes no more her name
To gay Catullus than you yours to me,
She who is fain that I her son should be.
Now four-and-thirty summers have gone by
Since without me to Ceres' deity
You bring your rustic cakes, while I away
In Italy have seen my hair turn grey.
If you will welcome my return, I come :
If not, I must go back again to Rome.

CIV

A MESSAGE TO SPAIN

Go, cross the wide but kindly sea
  With Flavus, go, my little book,
And may the gales propitious be
  Until on Tarraco you look ;
Thence in a carriage travel fast
  Till Bilbilis, and Salo too,
Shall greet you, five swift stages past,—
  What orders do I give to you ?
Let naught be done till you have been
  To greet the few I loved of yore,
The comrades that I have not seen
  These four-and-thirty years and more ;
Bid Flavus find a pleasant spot
  —I ask no costly luxuries—
A cheap but comfortable cot
  Where weariness may lie at ease.
The captain's cursing you amain,
  Fair is the breeze, he will not brook
Delay and one must not detain
  A ship—Good-bye, my little book !

BOOK ELEVEN

I

TO HIS BOOK

How spruce you are, my book ; how debonair !
Is Tyrian dye the hue for daily wear ?
You're decked to see Parthenius ? Foolish rover,
Go—and return with not a page turned over :
He pores o'er documents of state alone
And shuns your Muse, and seldom courts his own.
Are lesser folk too mean for you ? Nay, go
And seek forthwith Quirinus' portico ;
'Tis near, and you will find an idler host
Than Pompey's or Europa's porches boast,
Or that wherein the heartless Jason stands ;
Some two or three perhaps, with curious hands,
May shake the bookworms from your trifling page,
That is, should nothing serious engage
Their mind, and they be tired of sporting chat—
Of course you cannot hope to vie with that.

* II

CARNIVAL

Forbidding Cato with your rigid frown,
And old Fabricius' daughters, get you gone ;
And masked Conceit, and stiff Propriety
And all that in the darkness we put by.
Ho for the Saturnalia, my boys !
Ours under Nerva are permitted joys.
Read crabbed Santra, if you so incline ;
But let me be ; this little book is mine.

III

A PATRON WANTED

My song is not for city-folk alone,
Not ears of idlers only hear my lay,
But stern centurions its magic own,
'Mid Getic frost they thumb my pages gay,
And painted Britons sing my songs, men say ;
' What profit ' ? saith my empty purse to me.
Yet could I sound a strain of deathless worth,
So loud and clear my clarion tone should be,
If Heaven that gives Augustus back to earth
Would send Maecenas, niggard Rome, to thee.

IV

ON NERVA'S THIRD CONSULSHIP

HOME-GODS, whom great Aeneas saved of old,
Leaving his wealth when Troy was all afire,
And Jove, now imaged in eternal gold,
Thou child, thou sister of the heavenly sire,
And Janus too, fulfil my heart's desire—
Preserve unchanged the prince thou hast enrolled
Thrice on thy page—and let the Senate be
In following Nerva, perfect e'en as he.

* V

TO THE EMPEROR NERVA

IN thee such reverence for right we see
As Numa showed us in his poverty,
Though hard it is your ways on his to mould
When Croesus ne'er could vie with you in gold.
Were the great names of yore to live again,
And we might empty the Elysian plain,
Camillus with thee will for freedom stand,
Fabricius gold accept from out thy hand,
Brutus accept thy guidance, Sulla grant
To thee the power he doth no longer want;
Pompey his love in private will allow
And Crassus on thee all his wealth bestow.
Yea, even Cato, from hell's nether tide
Returning, now will be on Caesar's side.

VI

HO FOR THE SATURNALIA

GLAD are the days of ancient Saturn's feast
What time the lordly dice-box reigns, a king;
O cap-decked Rome, is not my Muse released
From trammels now? You laugh—so I may sing;
Hence, hence ye pallid cares, get far away
And let me speak whatever comes to mind,
No need have I of surly thought to-day—
But first a lavish draught of Nero's kind,

Half wine, half water ; that's the rule, my slave ;
So fill the generous cup ; then mingle more
Than erst Pythagoras to Nero gave ;
Sober I'm naught, but if good wine you pour
A tenfold spirit shall my song inspire :
And add the kisses that Catullus knew,
Then should I sing with all Verona's fire
And even match the ' sparrow song ' for you.

* VII

TO PAULA

NEVER more will you say to your poor silly dolt
Of a husband—before to your lover you bolt—
' The Emperor bade me this morning to go
To Circeii or Alba '—That trick's useless now.
Under Nerva you might a Penelope be,
If from your old itch you could only get free.
But how will you manage ? Suppose you pretend
You are going to see a poor sick lady-friend—
Your husband will trot at your heels all the way
And insist on your people a visit to pay.
Other wantons perhaps to cool their inner fire
Might say that a spitz-bath is what they require :
But to tell the plain truth is much better by far,
And to cry—' There's my lover. I'm off. Tra-la-la '.

* VIII

KISSES

BREATH of balm from foreign trees,
Scent of saffron on the breeze,
Fields abloom in leafy spring,
Winter apples ripening,
Silken robes worn by a queen,
Amber in maids' hands that's been,
Dark Falernian from a jar
When 'tis shattered—but afar,
Hyblan bees o'er garden beds,
Chaplets from rich feasters' heads,
Altars, where the incense burns,
Cosmus' alabaster urns—

Why say more ? All fragrant scents,
If you mingle their contents,
Do no more than match the kiss
Of my lover. What is this ?
Want to know his name ? Ah, well,
Swear that you will never tell.
You say you've sworn already. That won't do.
Methinks, my friend, you want too much to know.

IX

ON THE TOMB OF THE ACTOR MEMOR

Ennobled by the poet's crown,
Memor, the glory of the stage,
Death may not vanquish thy renown,
Art bids thee live from age to age.

X

ON TURNUS, BROTHER OF MEMOR

For lighter verse is Turnus known,
The tragic bays he would not claim ;
Since these had Memor made his own,
He would not mar a brother's fame.

* XI

OLD FASHIONS ARE BEST

Off with these chaliced bowls from Nile's warm land
And give me, boy, the mug with careless hand
Which once my sires from close-cropped pages took,
That so my board may have its ancient look.
Sardanapallus, drink from jewelled cup,
You who for women's pots broke Mentor up !

* XII

TO ZOILUS

TAKE, if you will, a ' father's right ' for seven,
You who've no father nor yet mother even.

XIII

ON THE TOMB OF THE ACTOR PARIS

STAY, traveller, and pass not by
This noble monument unread,
The city's darling here doth lie,
Wit, art, and grace with him are fled
And Rome doth mourn uncomforted.
Lost is her dear delight and prize,
For love and all desire are dead,
Hid in the grave where Paris lies.

* XIV

ON A DWARF'S TOMB

HOB is too small to have a mound raised o'er him :
One clod of earth would be too heavy for him.

* XV

THE FESTIVE SEASON

SOME books of mine old Cato's bride
And sober Sabine dames might read ;
This one throws gravity aside
And is a very naughty screed.

It's wet with wine and feels no shame
With Cosmian perfumes to be sprayed,
It tells of Cupid's wanton game
And boldly calls a spade a spade.

But so did Numa long ago ;
And these loose verses, pray remember,
Do not my life and manners show,
They're meant to suit with gay December.

* XVI

A WARNING TO PRUDES

GRAVE reader, go—wherever you may please—
I'm writing now for Roman cits at ease.
This scroll is full of Priapean rhymes
And sound of castanets from Spanish climes.
Though you more stern than ancient Curius be
You will be fired, methinks, if you read me.
Yet modest maidens at this sportive book
May in their cups perchance with favour look,
And matrons hide it from their lords away—
Meaning to finish it some other day.

XVII

TO SABINUS

THOUGH for convivial hours my verse be fit
Somewhat of sober thought doth lurk in it.

XVIII

TO LUPUS

YOU gave me an estate near town, you say:
My window-ledge provides a larger! Nay,
How can you dare to term it so to me?
One sprig of rue Diana's grove must be,
A cricket's leg could shade it over quite,
An ant despoil it in a single night,
The tiniest rose-leaf cover it, and rare
As Cosmus' nard is any herbage there;
A gherkin cannot lie at length; though small
And tightly coiled a snake can cover all;
A slug half-starved there is—the willow-bed
Nurtured a gnat—the famished brute is dead;
A mole is ditcher—and he ploughs as well;
There was a mushroom but it could not swell;
The fig and violet, so cramped were they
As not to open to the light of day;
A mouse is there, my bailiff dreads it more
Than if it were the Calydonian boar;

When ripe the crop, fell Procne down may flit
And in her nest may garner all of it ;
If it escape her ravening claws and bill,
An empty snail-shell it may chance to fill ;
Priapus' figure may not here abide,
Shorn of his staff, he could not get inside ;
Then for the wine, in place of cask or butt,
We store the vintage in a pitch-dressed nut ;
To call the place a field is quite absurd,
Take out or change two letters of the word,
Change L to E, omit the second letter,
And give me the result, 'twould suit me better.

* XIX

TO GALLA

You ask why I will not a learned wife take ?
Too often a ' mentulae lapsus ' I make.

XX

THE POET'S MODEL

You carping knave who hate my frankness, note
These merry verses that Augustus wrote :
' Since Fulvia's lord to Glycera transfers
His love, to me has Fulvia proffered hers ;
Must I be proxy then, or if he plead
Play Jove with Manius for a Ganymede.
" 'Tis love or war ", says Fulvia. Be it so
No hireling will I be. Blow, Trumpet, blow ! '
So Caesar wrote—plain words and merry wit—
But when I follow, you object to it.

XXI

Lydia tam laxa est equitis quam culus aeni,
Quam celer arguto qui sonat aere trochus,
Quam rota transmisso totiens inpacta petauro,
Quam uetus a crassa calceus udus aqua,
Quam quae rara uagos expectant retia turdos,
Quam Pompeiano uela negata Noto.

Quam quae de pthisico lapsa est armilla cinaedo.
Culcita Leuconico quam uiduata suo,
Quam ueteres bracae Brittonis pauperis, et quam
Turpe Rauennatis guttur onocrotali.
Hanc in piscina dicor futuisse marina.
Nescio ; piscinam me futuisse puto.

XXII

Mollia quod niuei duro teris ore Galaesi
Basia, quod nudo cum Ganymede iaces,
(Quis negat ?) hoc nimiumst. Sed sit satis ; inguina saltem
Parce fututrici sollicitare manu.
Leuibus in pueris plus haec quam mentula peccat
Et faciunt digiti praecipitantque uirum :
Inde tragus celeresque pili mirandaque matri
Barba, nec in clara balnea luce placent.
Diuisit natura marem : pars una puellis,
Una uiris genita est. Utere parte tua.

* XXIII

THE UNWILLING BENEDICT

Upon any conditions Dame Sila wants me,
But upon no conditions her husband I'll be.
When she pressed me I said—' I require from my wife
Ten thousand as dowry, no less on my life.
Moreover we'll sleep in a separate room
And not e'en the first night to your bed shall I come.
You will not interfere when my girl I embrace,
And will send your own maid, if I ask, in your place.
At dinner on different sides we'll recline,
And the fringe of your shawl must not hang down on mine.
One kiss in a month, and don't ask for another ;
And then not as wife but as elderly mother.
So if to these conditions you now will agree—
You may get some one else for your husband, not me.'

XXIV

TO AN EXACTING PATRON

Whilst I escort or see you home and hear
Your endless babble with a servile ear,
Praise everything you do, and laud your taste,
How many epigrams have gone to waste !

Seems it a paltry thing to lose to-day
What Romans read and strangers far away ?
To knights and senators my lines appeal,
These lawyers love and poets often steal ;
And now much work has died still-born—'tis true
I swear, my worthy friend,—and all through you ;
Is this endurable, that to increase
Your crowd of clients, half my work must cease ?
Thus of my book a single page is done,
Although it is a month since 'twas begun ;
Such is the penalty of bards at Rome—
They only do their work who dine at home.

XXV

Illa salax nimium nec paucis nota puellis
Stare Lino desit mentula. Lingua, caue.

* XXVI

LOVE'S FRUITION

My pleasant solace, my delightful care,
Than whom no heart has ever been more dear,
O give me first a kiss with wine-stained lip
Before I take the cup wherefrom you sip ;
And then if you will love's true joys bestow,
Not Jove himself surpasses me, I trow.

XXVII

TO FLACCUS

A man of adamant you surely are
To love a dame who loves stale vinegar,
A dame whose palate whelks and tripe enchant,
Who thinks bananas too extravagant,
Whose maid brings in (rare trove !) a common pot
Of spoiled sardines to eat before they rot ;
Grown lowish now and not afraid to shock
She begs for flannelette to make a frock ;
My dame will ask for attar, precious stuff,
' *Worth* ' for her frocks is hardly good enough ;

Fine graded pearls and emeralds I must find.
And gold is copper to her generous mind.
Is any mistress worth the cost? Oh no—
And yet she ought to think I think her so.

XXVIII

INUASIT medici Nasica phreneticus Eucti
Et percidit Hylan. Hic, puto, sanus erat.

XXIX

TO PHYLLIS

TRYING to fan his passion into flame,
You ancient dame, you choke a languid lover;
And when you call him many a pretty name,
It takes him simply ages to recover.

That's not the way—such blandishments abjure—
Offer him gold, a cellar, wine to fill it,
Slaves, houses, gorgeous plate, and furniture,
These may warm passion, your caresses chill it.

XXX

Os male causidicis et dicis olere poetis.
Sed fellatori, Zoile, peius olet.

XXXI

GOURDS

THOUGH Atreus, so the fable runs,
Sliced up and cooked Thyestes' sons,
Caecilius with humaner mind
Plays Atreus with the pumpkin kind;
Hors d'oeuvres of gourd are offered you
And gourd for courses one and two—
Then comes a change? Oh no, you'll see
Some sort of gourd for number three;

Next for dessert—you then may take
Compote of gourd and pumpkin cake,
Insipid it must be confessed,
Although the cook has done his best
With pumpkin puffs and dates like those
So popular in all the shows ;
Then the mixed dishes, to one's view
Lentil or beans, are pumpkin too.
Mock mushrooms and mock tunny fin,
Mock rissoles, mock sardines—within
Are merely pumpkin pulp, and though
All flavourings the cook doth know,
Not rue nor any sauce can hide
The fact that they are gourd inside ;
Each dish, the greatest like the least,
Is pumpkin ! This he calls a feast,
Because he gives you courses many
Which altogether cost one penny.

XXXII

TO NESTOR

No coat or bed, however foul, you own,
No mat of reeds, although a cheap and hard one,
No slave or young or old, no child or crone,
No cup, no bolt, no door, no dog, to guard one.

Yet you pretend—an idle stratagem—
That you are poor, ah, vain, self-flattering fancy !
Many are poor ; you cannot rank with them,
Yours is not poverty but mendicancy.

XXXIII

THE GREEN CHARIOT

How oft the green hath won ! 'Aye', envy saith,
'By Nero's favour were the rest undone'.
Doth Nero's favour then outlive his death ?
For since he died more palms the green hath won !

XXXIV

A GOOD NEIGHBOUR

Aper has bought a ruin foul
Too grimy for the moping owl,
A cunning rogue is he ;
Hard by doth wealthy Maro dwell,
So Aper looks to board right well,
Though vile his lodging be.

XXXV

TO FABULLUS

Of all the guests you ask to dine
I know not one, so I decline ;
Why should you grumble ? 'Tis not rude
To hate a crowded solitude.

XXXVI

TO JULIUS PROCULUS

Julius, a pearl should mark the day whereon
Heaven gave you life in answer to my prayer ;
Now joy is deeper for the dread that's gone,
Less glad are they who never knew despair ;
Hypnus, you sluggard, pour a vintage rare,
This festal day my oldest cask may claim,
And I would quaff and you, my slave, shall share
A draught to every letter of his name.

XXXVII

FETTERS OF GOLD

Why gird a jewel with a pound of gold ?
Poor Sardonyx, 'tis smothered I declare !
Nay, Zoilus, a finger cannot bear
The weight you bore upon your leg of old.

XXXVIII

HIS CONFIDANT

He bought a slave to drive his mule
And paid a thousand—what a fool !
The slave is deaf—all hearing gone—
The buyer was a Solomon !

XXXIX

TO HIS OLD TUTOR

You rocked my cradle, were my boyhood's guide,
And faithful comrade ever at my side ;
  And now my beard makes black the shaving-cloth
  And these my bristles rouse my lady's wrath,
You think me still the child you used to chide,
My bailiff trembles, pale and terrified,
  My roof, too, quakes when your reproof goes forth,
I'm only free to do what you decide.

So if I game or flirt, you mourn your woes ;
I use some scent, you scarce refrain from blows,
  For that my father never used to do ;
  So if I wear a cloak of Tyrian hue
Or drink a draught of wine, one might suppose
You had to pay. Bring grumbling to a close,
  I hate a freedman who's a Cato too.
Am I a man you ask ? My lady knows.

* XL

A SAD CALAMITY

Lupercus is beautiful Glycera's lover,
But for a whole month not one kiss he's had of her,
  His passionate ardour to slake.
He goes about town in most sorrowful guise,
And to friendly inquirers he sadly replies—
  ' I'm afraid that she has a toothache '.

* XLI

THE CAREFUL SWINEHERD

YOUNG Amyntas considered his pigs extra fine,
And was rather too anxious to pamper the swine,
Till one day while shaking down acorns beneath
He fell from the branches and so met his death.
His father condemned the fell tree to the fire
And burned all its wood on the funeral pyre.
Let my neighbours insist that their pigs fattened be,
If my man counts the herd, that's sufficient for me.

XLII

TO CAECILIANUS

YOU ask for lively epigrams, but give
Themes dull and dead—no art could make them live.
If Attic bees were fed upon a field
Of bitter herbs, what honey would they yield ?

XLIII

DEPRENSUM in puero tetricis me uocibus, uxor,
  Corripis et culum te quoque habere refers.
Dixit idem quotiens lasciuo Iuno Tonanti !
  Ille tamen grandi cum Ganymede iacet.
Incuruabat Hylan posito Tirynthius arcu :
  Tu Megaran credis non habuisse natis ?
Torquebat Phoebum Daphne fugitiua : sed illas
  Oebalius flammas iussit abire puer.
Briseis multum quamuis auersa iaceret,
  Aeacidae propior leuis amicus erat.
Parce tuis igitur dare mascula nomina rebus
  Teque puta cunnos, uxor, habere duos.

XLIV

LEGACY-HUNTERS

CHILDLESS and rich and of an age untold,
Can these new friends be true as were the old
When you were young ere wealth had come to you ?
Nay, 'tis your will that's courted by the new.

XLV

Intrasti quotiens inscriptae limina cellae,
Seu puer adrisit siue puella tibi,
Contentus non es foribus ueloque seraque,
Secretumque iubes grandius esse tibi :
Oblinitur minimae si qua est suspicio rimae
Punctaque lasciua quae terebrantur acu.
Nemo est tam teneri tam sollicitique pudoris
Qui uel pedicat, Canthare, uel futuit.

XLVI

Iam nisi per somnum non arrigis et tibi, Maeui,
Incipit in medios meiere uerpa pedes,
Truditur et digitis pannucea mentula lassis
Nec leuat extinctum sollicitata caput.
Quid miseros frustra cunnos culosque lacessis ?
Summa petas : illic mentula uiuit anus.

XLVII

Omnia femineis quare dilecta cateruis
Balnea deuitat-Lattara ? Ne futuat.
Cur nec Pompeia lentus spatiatur in umbra
Nec petit Inachidos limina ? Ne futuat.
Cur Lacedaemonio luteum ceromate corpus
Perfundit gelida Virgine ?Ne futuat.
Cum sic feminei generis contagia uitet,
Cur lingit cunnum Lattara ? Ne futuat.

* XLVIII

ON A MONUMENT ERECTED BY SILIUS AT VIRGIL'S GRAVE

To Virgil's tomb this honour Silius pays,
Who holds the lands where Cicero spent his days.
As heir and owner of his home and grave
None other Tully or Maro would have.

* XLIX

ON THE SAME

One humble hind remained the rites to pay
To Maro's ashes where alone they lay :
Silius resolved to help the abandoned shade
And now his brother-poet comes to aid.

L

WOMEN'S TRICKS

Phyllis, you rob me every day,
It is my foolish love that lets you,
The cunning, too, that you display,
Wherein your lying maid abets you !

She hints of ring or mirror lost,
Of scent all gone, or missing jewel,
Or smuggled silk at trifling cost,
To miss so rare a chance were cruel !

You need a cask of wine—the best
To help some witch's charm (or gullet ?),
Or else an unexpected guest
Has come and you want pike or mullet.

I pray you, Phyllis, show some small
Regard for truth, and frankly use me,
Remembering, if I give my all,
Whate'er I ask you can't refuse me.

LI

Tanta est quae Titio columna pendet
Quantam Lampsaciae colunt puellae.
Hic nullo comitante nec molesto
Thermis grandibus et suis lauatur,
Anguste Titius tamen lauatur.

LII

TO JULIUS CERIALIS

Come, Julius, share a pleasant meal with me,
If you should have no better occupation,
(We'll bathe together—keep the eighth hour free,
You know the bath adjoins my habitation),
Sliced leeks and wholesome lettuce there will be,
And tunny fry in happy combination
With rue and sauce of egg—I like it well
When rather larger than a mackerel.

Eggs also, poached upon a slack-wood fire,
Picenian olives touched by frost but lightly,
These first. Shall I tell more ?—in my desire
To bring you, pardon my romancing slightly ;
My fish, birds, game, a gourmet might inspire,
A Stella's table does not see them nightly ;
No verse I'll read but you shall give me all
Your epic and Virgilian pastoral.

LIII

ON CLAUDIA RUFINA

Though from the painted Britons Claudia came,
Her noble soul befits the Roman race,
Her kinship dames of Italy might claim,
Greeks laud her beauty ; and by heaven's grace
Offspring she hath ; so ere her lovely face
Hath lost its youth, they too shall wed, and she
Loving her lord, in him shall ever place
Her trust, rejoicing in her children three.

LIV

TO ZOILUS

You snatched that half-burned incense from the fire,
Stole cinnamon and nard from bier and pyre,
Your myrrh and cassia have tainted breath.
Restore, polluted knave, your spoils to Death ;
Small wonder that your hands have learned to cheat ;
Slave, runaway, they learned it from your feet.

LV

THE HYPOCRITE

He hopes that you may have a son, he says ;
A silly lie, there's naught he wishes less ;
This is the fortune-hunter's trick—he prays
For what, if granted, would his soul distress ;
Just watch the rascal blench if you profess
That your Cosconia expects an heir ;
And let your will suggest that all success
(How he will rave !) attended on his prayer.

* LVI

THE POOR PHILOSOPHER

You want me, Chaeremon, your courage to praise
Because you'ld be glad of an end to your days.
'Tis your poor broken pitchers this virtue create,
Your bugs, and thin blankets, and fireless grate,
Your bare truckle bedstead, and short scanty gown
Which is worn all the day and at night on you thrown.
You must be a marvellous hero indeed
To give up your vinegar and straw and black bread.

Come, suppose that your pillow is stuffed with soft wool,
And that over your couch close-clipped purple you pull,
While you have by your side the fair page who at dinner
Made each of your guests in his fancy a sinner.
How then would you wish to be Nestor thrice over,
And reasons for living each fresh day discover !
It's easy in trouble this world to despise ;
The brave man is he who endures miseries.

LVII

TO SEVERUS

Do not wonder if I send
Rhyme to greet a poet friend
Who in learning doth transcend
All I know.

As we offer at his shrine,
Who is fed on food divine,
Common meats and earthly wine,
Even so

I may send it, may I not ?
Though I cannot add a jot
To the blessings you had got
Long ago.

LVIII

Cum me uelle uides tentumque, Telesphore, sentis,
Magna rogas : puta me uelle negare : licet ?
Et nisi iuratus dixi ' Dabo ', subtrahis illas,
Permittunt in me quae tibi multa, natis.
Quid si me tonsor, cum stricta nouacula supra est,
Tunc libertatem diuitiasque roget ?
Promittam ; neque enim rogat illo tempore tonsor,
Latro rogat ; res est inperiosa timor :
Sed fuerit curua cum tuta nouacula theca,
Frangam tonsori crura manusque simul.
At tibi nil faciam, sed lota mentula laeua
λαικάζειν cupidae dicet auaritiae.

* LIX

THE IMPECUNIOUS DANDY

Six rings on each finger young Algernon wears,
And keeps them all on in his bath, it appears,
And when he is lying asleep of a night.
' The reason ? He has not a ring-case ' ? That's right.

LX

Sit Phlogis an Chione Veneri magis apta requiris ?
Pulchrior est Chione ; sed Phlogis ulcus habet,
Ulcus habet Priami quod tendere possit alutam
Quodque senem Pelian non sinat esse senem ;
Ulcus habet quod habere suam uult quisque puellam,
Quod sanare Criton, non quod Hygia potest.
At Chione non sentit opus nec uocibus ullis
Adiuuat, absentem marmoreamue putes.
Exorare, dei, si uos tam magna liceret
Et bona uelletis tam pretiosa dare,
Hoc quod habet Chione corpus faceretis haberet
Ut Phlogis, et Chione quod Phlogis ulcus habet.

LXI

Lingua maritus, moechus ore Nanneius,
Summemmianis inquinatior buccis ;
Quem cum fenestra uidit a Suburana
Obscena nudum Leda, fornicem cludit
Mediumque mauult basiare quam summum ;
Modo qui per omnes uiscerum tubos ibat
Et uoce certa consciaque dicebat
Puer an puella matris esset in uentre,
(Gaudete cunni ; uestra namque res acta est)
Arrigere linguam non potest fututricem.
Nam dum tumenti mersus haeret in uolua
Et uagientes intus audit infantes,
Partem gulosam soluit indecens morbus.
Nec purus esse nunc potest nec inpurus.

LXII

BOUGHT PLEASURES

She never gives herself for love ? No doubt.
She has to buy her loves or do without !

LXIII

Spectas nos Philomuse cum lauamur,
Et quare tibi tam mutuniati
Sint leves pueri subinde quaeris.
Dicam simpliciter tibi roganti :
Pedicant, Philomuse, curiosos.

LXIV

'YES'

I know not what you write to girls, and yet—
I know the answer that you never get.

LXV

TO JUSTINUS

To-day your birthday board to grace
You ask a horde of guests to dine.
In other years an honoured place—
And none disputed it—was mine ;
You bid me come to-morrow ? Nay,
Let ' friends,' with whom I am not classed,
Observe the feast, but must I pay
With presents for a feast that's past ?

* LXVI

TO VACERRA

Informer, libel-monger, cut-throat, knave,
Pander, to every loathsome vice a slave,
Vacerra, it is marvellous that you
With these resources are a pauper too.

LXVII

TO MARO

Naught will you give me while you live ;
You'll leave your wealth to me ?
Then if you're sane, it must be plain
What my desire will be.

LXVIII

TO MATHO

The great refuse you little loans ? Then press
For great ones, so refusal shames one less.

LXIX

ON A DOG'S GRAVE

TRAINED in the amphitheatre and found
Ruthless in chase and yet a gentle hound,
Lydia my name ; my lord had chosen me
Before thy loyal friend, Erigone ;
Or him who, following Cephalus afar
From Dicte's land, became with him a star,
The faithful hound that loved Dulichium's lord
Was numbed, of lagging years, and age abhorred ;
The flashing tushes of a slavering boar,
Huge as the brute in Calydon of yore,
Thrust me in youth to death. Shall I repine ?
Nay for a nobler fate could not be mine.

* LXX

TO TUCCA

How can you endure to sell your poor boys ;
Each cost you a thousand, these delicate toys.
Do not their caresses your stubborn heart move,
Their artless complaints, and the signs of their love.
If you want ready money, there's land you can sell,
Your house and your plate, cups and tables as well,
Old slaves of your father's—I'm sure they won't mind—
Nothing matters as long as the boys stay behind.
It was reckless to buy them—that none will deny—
But to sell them would recklessness greater imply.

LXXI

HYSTERICAM uetulo se dixerat esse marito
Et queritur futui Leda necesse sibi ;
Sed flens atque gemens tanti negat esse salutem
Seque refert potius proposuisse mori.
Uir rogat ut uiuat, uirides nec deserat annos,
Et fieri quod iam non facit ipse sinit.
Protinus accedunt medici medicaeque recedunt,
Tollunturque pedes. O medicina grauis !

LXXII

Drauci Natta sui uocat pipinnam,
Conlatus cui Gallus est Priapus.

* LXXIII

TO LYGDUS

How often you've promised that to me you'ld come,
And fixed both the time and the place ;
While I, all impatience, have waited at home,
And ne'er got a glimpse of your face.
What curse shall I ask on your shoulders be laid ?
May you carry a one-eyed old lady's sunshade !

LXXIV

Curandum penem commisit Baccara Raetus
Riuali medico. Baccara Gallus erit.

LXXV

Theca tectus ahenea lauatur
Tecum, Caelia, seruus ; ut quid, oro,
Non sit cum citharoedus aut choraules ?
Non uis, ut puto, mentulam uidere.
Quare cum populo lauaris ergo ?
Omnes an tibi nos sumus spadones ?
Ergo, ne uidearis inuidere,
Seruo, Caelia, fibulam remitte.

LXXVI

A RICH CREDITOR

You dun me for ten pounds I owe, and on the petty grounds
That some one else has failed, and so you lose two hundred pounds,
But why exact from me the dues unpaid by other men ?
For if two hundred you can lose, why, you can lose the ten.

LXXVII

In omnibus Vacerra quod conclauibus
Consumit horas et die toto sedet,
Cenaturit Vacerra, non cacaturit.

LXXVIII

Vtere femineis conplexibus, utere, Victor,
Ignotumque sibi mentula discat opus.
Flammea texuntur sponsae, iam uirgo paratur,
Tondebit pueros iam nous nupta tuos.
Pedicare semel cupido dabit illa marito,
Dum metuit teli uulnera prima noui :
Saepius hoc fieri nutrix materque uetabunt
Et dicent : ' Vxor, non puer, ista tibi est '.
Heu quantos aestus, quantos patiere labores,
Si fuerit cunnus res peregrina tibi !
Ergo Suburanae tironem trade magistrae.
Illa uirum faciet ; non bene uirgo docet.

LXXIX

PETITE VITESSE

'Twas evening ere I got a mile from town,
Yet I am not the sluggard that you thought me.
To your account the fault is written down ;
Remember, Paetus, 'twas your mules that brought me !

LXXX

THE CHARMS OF BAIAE

Baiae is happy Venus' golden shore,
Nature's alluring gift, her joy and pride,
And, though a thousand verses I should pour,
Yet must I leave her beauty half-belied.
Is Julius there ? Nay, Fortune should deride
My greed if I should pray to meet him there ;
And yet might heaven that double boon provide
Julius *and* Baiae—what a joy it were !

LXXXI

Cum sene communem uexat spado Dindymus Aeglen
Et iacet in medio sicca puella toro.
Uiribus hic, operi non est hic utilis annis :
Ergo sine effectu prurit utrique labor.
Supplex illa rogat pro se miserisque duobus,
Hunc iuuenem facias, hunc, Cytherea, uirum.

* LXXXII

THE WINE-BIBBER

A guest, going home to his lodging at night,
Had near Sinuessa an unpleasant fright,
For hurrying down a long stairway he fell,
And all but joined hapless Elpenor in hell.
He would never have fallen, ye Nymphs of the shrine,
If he'd kept to your water and kept off the wine.

LXXXIII

PAYING GUESTS

The childless rich—and only they—
For nothing may with Andrew stay—
But, when he pockets large bequests,
We see they're really paying guests.

LXXXIV

THE BARBER

You would not feel Ixion's wheel or change with Sisyphus ?
Oh then, beware the barber's chair of dread Antiochus !
The frenzied crowd may cry aloud with howls delirious ;
Their arms they slash—your deadly gash is worse, Antiochus.
One may endure a surgeon's ' cure ' in fashion valorous,
Or broken bone without a groan—but not Antiochus.
'Twould take the crew of cynics who are most necessitous,
Or else a horse, whose mane is coarse, to bear Antiochus.
Though vultures tear Prometheus there upon the Caucasus,

A ravening bird would be preferred to you, Antiochus.
Pentheus would flee to Agavë, that mother infamous,
Or Orpheus face the Maenad race—but not Antiochus.
I've lost the skin from cheek and chin, the cause would you discuss ?
It was not strife or frenzied wife—it was Antiochus !
Old pugilists from other's fists are oft disfigured thus ;
But I am marred and mauled and scarred all by Antiochus.
The goat alone hath wisdom shown, more sensible than us,
He grew a beard because he feared to meet Antiochus !

LXXXV

SIDERE percussa est subito tibi, Zoile, lingua,
Dum lingis. Certe, Zoile, nunc futuis.

LXXXVI

THE GREEDY PATIENT

To heal your throat and give your cough relief
The doctor put you on a pleasant diet,
Sweet kernels, honey, cakes—the things, in brief,
We give to noisy boys to keep them quiet.
That cough goes on—the treatment seems no use for it—
'Tis greed, my friend, and coughing the excuse of it !

LXXXVII

DIUES erat quondam : sed tunc pedico fuisti
Et tibi nulla diu femina nota fuit.
Nunc sectaris anus. O quantum cogit egestas !
Illa fututorem te, Charideme, facit.

LXXXVIII

MULTIS iam, Lupe, posse se diebus
Pedicare negat Charisianus.
Causam cum modo quaererent sodales,
Uentrem dixit habere se solutum.

* LXXXIX

TO POLLA

WHY give me garlands that you've never fingered ?
Send rather roses where your hands have lingered.

XC

TO CHRESTILLUS

SMOOTH verse you hate, but love the kind
That tumbles over crags linguistic ;
Milton is weaker to your mind
Than any babbler archaistic.

You set up rugged word and phrase
For imitation—'twould not hurt you
If, like the ancients whom you praise,
You too adopted rugged virtue.

* XCI

ON THE TOMB OF A CHILD WHO DIED OF CANCER

POOR Canacë lies buried in this tomb,
A child whose seventh winter scarce had come.
O shame, O monstrous crime ! Yet, stranger, hear ;
'Tis not for life cut short we shed this tear.
Than death itself more cruel was death's guise,
The cancerous growth that spread before our eyes
And did at last so eat her lips away
That half-consumed upon the pyre they lay.
If 'twere decreed that death should come so soon,
Some other way the fell deed had been done.
But lest her plaintive cries the gods should reach
Fate closed the channel of her baby speech.

XCII

THE EPITOME

HE said you were a vicious man ? He lied :
You're not a man, you're vice personified.

XCIII

THE GODS' MISTAKE

A POET'S house consumed by fire !
Phoebus and ye, the heavenly choir,
What vengeance will ye now require
For such a fell disaster ?

How foul a deed, how black a shame !
Can men acquit the gods of blame
When they delivered to the flame
The house and not its master ?

XCIV

TO AN ENVIOUS JEW RIVAL

OF course you envy all I write or do,
But that is pardonable in a Jew ;
You steal the verse you sneer about ; this too
Is naught and shows some wisdom for a Jew.
But now you dare my loved one to pursue,
Must I endure that insult from a Jew ?
You swear by Jove you do not ? That's untrue :
Swear by your Syrian gods, you perjured Jew !

XCV

INCIDERIS quotiens in basia fellatorum,
In solium puta te mergere, Flacce, caput.

XCVI

ON A GERMAN WHO DROVE A ROMAN BOY FROM THE MARCIAN AQUEDUCT

THIS is the Marcian stream ; afar
Doth flow your native Rhine ;
Yet from the fount you dare debar
One of the victor's line !

His is the free, the conquering race,
And, slave, although you thirst,
Our Roman pool should it abase
To serve a German first.

XCVII

VNA nocte quater possum : sed quattuor annis
Si possum, peream, te, Telesilla, semel.

XCVIII

THE FOND SALUTE

THERE'S no chance to escape from the kissers of Rome,
They meet you and cross you and follow you home,
They will hurry in hundreds from every place,
No salve-besmeared lips and no pimple-decked face,
Sore cheek or raw chin, will preserve you from those,
Though an icicle click at the end of your nose.
Be it cold, be it hot, or whatever betide,
They will steal the best kiss you had kept for your bride ;
You can wrap up your head in a hood of stout leather,
Or curtain your litter—that fails altogether ;
Through smallest of crevices kissers can crawl.
Will the dignified consul escape ? Not at all.
No, the tribune and he, though the lictors resist
With rod and with voice, will be certainly kissed ;
If you sit in the lofty tribunal and there
You administer law in the emperor's chair,
You may think, it may be, that you're safe for the time—
But no ; to that altitude kissers can climb.
Nor is fever—or mourning—a valid excuse ;
You can swim out to sea, but you'll find it no use ;
Is there then no escape ? Yes, one chance may exist :
Make friends with the kissers—you'll cease to be kissed.

XCIX

DE cathedra quotiens surgis (iam saepe notaui),
Pedicant miserae, Lesbia, te tunicae.
Quas cum conata es dextra, conata sinistra
Uellere, cum lacrimis eximis et gemitu :
Sic constringuntur magni Symplegade culi
Et nimias intrant Cyaneasque natis.
Emendare cupis uitium deforme ? Docebo :
Lesbia, nec surgas censeo nec sedeas.

C

THE HAPPY MEAN

Flaccus, no scraggy maid for me
To whom a finger-ring would be
A bracelet, one whose hip and knee
Might prick like any pin.
A jagged saw-like spine I shun,
And yet I do not like a ton
Of solid blubber, give me one
Who's neither fat nor thin.

* CI

TO FLACCUS

Jane is so thin that if, as you declare,
You see her, you can see what is not there.

CII

TO LYDIA

They told me you were lovely—yes,
The word is true, the judgment just,
While you are silent, motionless
As pictured form or waxen bust ;
Your speech turns love to sheer disgust,
Your face it mars, your charm it balks ;
Beware the aedile, all mistrust
The omen if a statue talks.

* CIII

TO SAFRONIUS

So modest are you both in looks and life,
I wonder how you ever knew your wife.

CIV

Vxor, uade foras aut moribus utere nostris :
Non sum ego nec Curius nec Numa nec Tatius.
Me iucunda iuuant tractae per pocula noctes :
Tu properas pota surgere tristis aqua.
Tu tenebris gaudes : me ludere teste lucerna
Et iuuat admissa rumpere luce latus.
Fascia te tunicaeque obscuraque pallia celant :
At mihi nulla satis nuda puella iacet.
Basia me capiunt blandas imitata columbas :
Tu mihi das auiae qualia mane soles.
Nec motu dignaris opus nec uoce iuuare
Nec digitis, tamquam tura merumque pares :
Masturbabantur Phrygii post ostia serui,
Hectoreo quotiens sederat uxor equo,
Et quamuis Ithaco stertente pudica solebat
Illic Penelope semper habere manum.
Pedicare negas : dabat hoc Cornelia Graccho,
Iulia Pompeio, Porcia, Brute, tibi ;
Dulcia Dardanio nondum miscente ministro
Pocula, Iuno fuit pro Ganymede Ioui.
Si te delectat grauitas, Lucretia toto
Sis licet usque die ; Laida nocte uolo.

* CV

TO GARRICUS

Your present last year weighed exactly a pound,
But I see it's a quarter to-day :
Your system of reckoning's very unsound ;
At least, sir, a half you should pay.

CVI

TO VIBIUS MAXIMUS

If you have leisure, glance at this quatrain ;
You busy men shirk labour when you can,
So skip the rest and I shall not complain ;
You skip this too ? That *is* the wiser plan.

CVII

TIT FOR TAT

You brought me back my book, read through I know,
'Twas all unrolled ; the evidence assures
My mind and I believe it : aye, just so,
' I lost no time in reading five of yours ' !

CVIII

A HINT

Though so lengthy a book should your taste satisfy,
You have asked me for more : but my household will cry
For some food, and the usurer's drained me quite dry ;
So reader . . . you see what I mean to imply ?
You are silent and don't understand me ? Good bye !

BOOK TWELVE

BOOK TWELVE

PREFACE

VALERIUS MARTIALIS to his friend PRISCUS GREETING

I am aware that I owe you some sort of defence against a charge of most obstinate indolence persisting for three years, an indolence which could not be condoned even in one immersed in the engagements of city life, in which we more easily succeed in being a nuisance to our friends than an assistance to them. Still less is it excusable when one lives in this provincial desolation in which, unless a man spend his time in actually excessive study, he has no consolation nor any excuse for having run away from Rome.—Hear then my verses, wherein the chief and primary point is that I miss that cultured city audience to which I was accustomed, and feel as though I were conducting a lawsuit in a foreign court: for if there be anything pleasing in my books it is my hearers who put it there.

That critical delicacy, that inspiration drawn from one's surroundings, the libraries, theatres, and associations with men wherein pleasure learns without feeling that it is learning, those things, in a word, which I left in a mood of fastidiousness, I long for now, as though I were deserted. Besides this, there is the backbiting, typical of provincials; the envy that takes the place of balanced judgment; and the fact that, in a paltry little place like this, one or two malicious persons are as bad as a host elsewhere.—In the face of this, it is not easy always to maintain good-humour; you need not wonder, therefore, that I abandon in disgust occupations which I used to follow with relish. But now you are coming from Rome and you ask me for my work, and that I might not meet you with a refusal—although, in giving you all I can, I am by no means clearing my debt of gratitude to you—I laid upon myself as a duty the task I used to perform as a pleasure, and devoted just a few days to it, so that I might spread, as it were, a welcoming banquet before your ears which are always so very friendly to me. I only desire for these verses, which with you alone run no risk of disapproval, that you weigh their merits carefully and examine them without reluctance—also (though this is very difficult in your case) that in dealing with my trifles you will put aside all the glamour of friendship, lest I should send to Rome—that is if you decide that I ought to send—a book that not only comes from the provinces, but is utterly provincial.

I

AN IDLE HOUR

When you hear no music from baying hound,
When the woods are still and no boar is found,
And the nets afford no sport,
Let my little book have an hour with you,
For in less than that can you read it through,
Though a winter hour be short.

* II

TO HIS BOOK

Ye verses that to Pyrgi once would go,
Follow the Sacred Way not dusty now.

III

BACK TO ROME

From Rome of old to many a foreign land
You went, my little book, but now set forth to Rome.
From Salo's bank and Tagus' golden strand
The native stream of mine ancestral home.

Not wholly strange nor all unknown are you,
For Remus' lofty town knows well your kin ;
Seek as of right the fane now built anew,
Is not the Muses' shrine restored therein ?

Or if to Stella's dwelling you would fare,
Seek the Subura where it climbs the hill ;
My consul has his bay-decked dwelling there
And quaffs the waters of Ianthe's rill,

A lordly fountain cool and glassy clear—
The holy nine oft drink there, so 'tis said—
Through him your verse the citizens shall hear.
By knights and senators shall you be read.

IV

TO PRISCUS TERENTIUS

A SIMPLE knight, but one of kingly line,
To Horace, Varius, and the mighty seer,
Was help and stay of old: and you are mine,
As in the years long hence the world shall hear,
For fame shall tell it and my ageing page;
Through you my inspiration came to me,
And power—if power I have—and in my age
Such days of leisure as befit the free.

V

TO THE EMPEROR NERVA, WITH A SELECTION OF POEMS

MY book was longer than was fit,
This new edition shortens it,
And many verses I omit,
So this is my petition—
Let idle folk the larger choose,
And he who toils for us peruse
The shorter—he may not refuse
Some day the full edition.

VI

TO NERVA

Now Nerva kindliest of lords, doth reign,
To range on Helicon no more we dread,
Fair faith and Clemency return again
And tempered Might—but trembling Fear hath fled;
O loyal Rome, thy Tribes and peoples pray
That Nerva and his like may reign alway!

Hail to that noble soul, as Numa's pure,
Like Cato's—could a cheerful Cato be;
Hail to that generous hand that aids the poor,
Nay, heaven itself is not more kind than he:
In evil days no evil stained his mind,
Ruled by a cruel prince he dared be kind.

VII

THE KEY-NUMBER

If in the total number of her hairs we have a key,
We are surely right in saying that Ligeia's age is three.

* VIII

TO TRAJAN

When Rome, the goddess of all men and lands,
To whom no equal and no second stands,
Counted the years for Trajan that remain
Through many ages, and beheld again
One who was young and valiant and beside
A mighty captain, glorying she cried—
' Come, Parthian chiefs, ye Seric leaders come,
Ye Thracians and ye Britons troop to Rome,
Come, Sauromatians, and ye Getae too,
I have a Caesar now to show to you '.

* IX

TO TRAJAN

Palma is ruler now of our dear Spain
And his mild sway gives peace across the main.
O kindly emperor, grateful should we be
Who sendest to us manners like to thee.

X

ON AFRICANUS

Although he is an millionaire,
He courts the rich who lack an heir ;
Fortune gives much to many a one,
But just enough she grants to none.

XI

TO PARTHENIUS

Go forth my Muse, salute my friend and thine
Who oft has drunk of thy Pierian spring,
From out thy cave no clearer lyre doth ring
Than his ; and Phoebus loves him, and the Nine ;
Is he at leisure for thy songs and mine ?
Fond hope ! give him our humble offering
To lay before the Prince ; four words it needs ;
Let him say only ' This thy city reads '.

* XII

TO POLLIO

You're lavish with promises after a bout
Of drinking that lasts all the night ;
But when in the morning your friends meet you out,
There's never a penny in sight.
I wish that sometimes you'ld get drunk in the day,
And then what you promise perhaps you would pay.

XIII

TO AUCTUS

The rich feign wrath—a profitable plan ;
'Tis cheaper far to hate than help a man.

* XIV

LOOK BEFORE YOU LEAP

Be careful, Priscus, with your dashing steed ;
Such haste against poor hares you do not need.
Oft will the huntsman to his prey atone,
And thrown to earth find all his hunting done.
E'en level ground a rider may ensnare
Though neither ditch nor mound nor stones be there.
Others in plenty may enjoy their fling
Whose death on Fate would not such odium bring ;
But if to deeds of valour you must soar,
Let us with safer courage hunt the boar.
Why this rash riding ? If you are not stopped
You'll find that you, and not the hares, are chopped.

XV

DOMITIAN'S PALACE OPENED

See, given to the gods, before our eyes
The glittering gems a Nero used to prize,
And Jupiter doth marvel to behold
The emerald's lambent flame upon the gold,
The costly gauds that for a tyrant's whim
A ruined world must buy and give to him,
The jewelled goblets fit to grace the board
Where Ganymede doth serve Olympus' lord ;
Trajan enriches Jupiter, and we
Henceforth may live from dread exactions free,
That erst had robbed and burdened every home
And—shame upon it—spoiled the shrines of Rome !

XVI

Addixti, Labiene, tres agellos ;
Emisti, Labiene, tres cinaedos.
Pedicas, Labiene, tres agellos.

XVII

THE RICH INVALID

Fever abides with you too long, you say ;
That guest, whose lengthy visits you deplore,
Loves drives, luxurious bathing day by day,
And for his dinner, mushrooms, oysters, boar ;
Loves getting drunk—and you have ample store
Of wines, and always iced !—he loves display
Of rose-wreaths, essences, and hangings gay,
And downy beds like yours he doth adore ;
So, Dives, if you choose to treat him thus,
Why should he leave to live with Lazarus ?

XVIII

TO JUVENAL, ON THE PLEASURES OF SPAIN

Ah, friend, while you are trudging still
  The noisy streets as heretofore,
Or toiling up Diana's hill,
  Or waiting at a patron's door,

How hot your toga seems, how high
To heavy feet the Coelian !
For me such ills are past, for I
Am just a country gentleman ;

And here in Bilbilis, that yields
Rich gold and iron, lies my home,
Gaily I till Boterdum's fields
(How strange our names must sound in Rome !)

All night I sleep, and steal from day
Three hours or more ; for those arrears
Long overdue would I repay—
The debt that ran for thirty years.

The toga is an unknown thing,
And, should I ask new clothes to wear,
'Tis likely that my slave would bring
The cover from an old armchair.

Then blazing oak-logs welcome me,
The forest skirts my pleasant cot,
Which cook (my bailiff's wife is she)
Has crowned with many a hissing pot.

My close-shorn bailiff I receive ;
The boys, he thinks, their duty shirk :
He's jealous and he wants my leave
To crop their locks and make them work.

My keeper next, a comely boy,
His beauty would delight your eye.
This is the life I now enjoy
Thus ever would I live and die.

XIX

THE PICNIC

Light refreshments at the Baths we see Aemilius buying ;
So when he says he's dining out, we know he isn't lying.

XX

THE ALTERNATIVE

You wonder how he lives unmarried? Cease
To marvel, for his Reverence has a niece.

XXI

TO MARCELLA

Who could believe, Marcella, that your home
Was this rude land? Such beauty doth adorn
Your lovely soul, the court of royal Rome,
Hearing your voice, would claim you Roman born;
No high-bred city dame should ever scorn
Or ever rival you, a form so rare
Surpasses all, though beauty gathers there
From every land. Ah Rome! I longed for thee;
Now I shall pine and grieve no more, for where
Marcella dwells, that spot is Rome to me.

* XXII

THE BEAUTY

One-eyed Nan is so ugly, I'm sure you will own
She would be better looking if both eyes were gone.

XXIII

TO A LADY WHO HAS JUST LOST HER EYE

False hair and teeth you're not ashamed to buy;
What will you do, my dear, about your eye?

XXIV

ON RECEIVING A PRESENT OF A TRAVELLING-CARRIAGE

What gift could be more pleasant than
This carriage, sent by Aelian,
A cosy gig, more private far
Than curricles or coaches are ?
Here we can talk, a friend and I,
Of what we will, nor dread a spy ;
No groom, no negro coachman's near,
No footman cocks a prying ear,
The cobs are sure to be discreet,
And what they hear they won't repeat ;
I would Avitus were a third
With us, for what he overheard
Would matter nothing, were he nigh
How fast the happy day would fly.

XXV

TO TELESINUS

I asked a friendly loan, but you had got
No money, till I pledged my garden plot !
And so it came to this that you would lend
To trees and cabbages, but not a friend.
Now, charged with treason, you appeal to me :
Why should I help you ? Go and ask a tree !
Will I go with you if you're banished ? No.
Invite the cabbages you trusted so.

XXVI

EQUAL PAY

Although a Senator, you do not scorn
To court the great, while I, a knight abjure it ;
But when I trudge the streets from early morn,
'Tis but for idle greetings I endure it ;
You seek the consulate or would adorn
A post as governor, and you secure it,
I will not cheat my sleep and face the mire too.
Is that so lazy ? What could I aspire to ?

Must I escort you till my toes shall peer
  Through broken shoes, or face in desperation
The sudden storm (one's slave is never near
  In such a case) to win the invitation
Your servant whispers in my frozen ear ?
  Your dinner too ? I'd rather face starvation ;
You get a province, I a dinner ? Nay,
For equal work let us have equal pay.

XXVII

A LATRONIBUS esse te fututam
Dicis, Saenia : sed negant latrones.

XXVIII

TO CINNA

I DRAIN but a cup, while you empty a beaker ;
And yet you complain that your tipple is weaker.

XXIX

HERMOGENES

MASSA was bold in stealing gold—and yet Hermogenes,
Our napkin thief, in my belief, surpasses him with ease ;
You watch his wrist and seize his fist, or tie it up or knot it,
And yet anon, your napkin's gone—Hermogenes has got it !
So Iris may charm rain away, though heavy storm-clouds
  lower,
Or stags at will draw serpents chill, by their mysterious power ;
The arena's crowd once cried aloud to save a man alive
And kerchiefs waved—ere he was saved, Hermogenes got five ;
When in his place to start a race the praetor had to stop,
His kerchief white was gone from sight, ere it had time to
  drop ;
The folk of Rome now leave at home their kerchiefs, for they
  dread
Hermogenes who, lacking these, takes table-cloths instead ;
If none be there he'll even dare to steal more bulky things,
Though tightly stitched he's oft unhitched the sofa coverings ;
In summer's heat the sun may beat on people at the shows ;
Despite the glare, if he be there, away the awning goes ;

Or should he be on wharf or quay, a panic will prevail,
The sailors haste—no time they waste in furling every sail ;
It frightens, too, great Isis' crew ; her shaveling devotees
Are linen clad, they run like mad before Hermogenes.
All folk agree wherever he may dine, there's not a doubt,
When dinner's done he'll leave with one although he came without.

XXX

ON APER

He's sober and abstemious ? One commends
These qualities in slaves, but not in friends.

XXXI

MARCELLA'S GIFT

The grove, the woven shade of arching vine,
The streams, the runnels in their conduit clear,
Fields, roses—Paestum's hardly vie with mine—
The herbs that never know a winter drear,
The pond that teems with eels, the dovecote there,
All snowy-white, for whiter doves a shrine,
My lady gave when I returned to Spain
After long years ; Pheacia's realm divine
Nausicaa should offer me in vain :
'Tis in Marcella's I would choose to reign.

XXXII

MOVING DAY

Vacerra, when you moved on quarter-day
I saw your household goods, a foul display—
Most had been seized for two years' rent unpaid—
Borne by your wife, a carrot-headed jade,
—Seven hairs were left to prove the fact, no less—
Your sister, hideous, blousy giantess,
Trudged with the hag, your mother (truth to tell
I thought them furies coming up from hell).

You followed them, a starveling pinched with cold
The very tint of boxwood bleached and old ;
Irus are you, the type of pauperdom,
Your goods the fitting extract of a slum,
Three legs the bedstead owned, the table two,
Item a lantern, scarce a ray comes through,
Item a dirty pot and earthen bowl,
(The former cracked and dripping through a hole),
Item a brazier, with mould 'tis green,
Embracing which a battered crock is seen,
Item a jar whose ancient fish-like smell
Proclaims that there anchovies used to dwell,—
A dried-up fish-pool thus insults the breeze—
Nor was there lacking rinds of rotten cheese,
Or wreaths of flea-bane, stale and mouldering,
Garlic or onions dropping from the string,
Item some resin—this your mother owns—
An aid to beauty used by gutter crones ;
Why are you ' moving house ' ? It seems to me
Such families as yours should live rent free :
Don't mock house-agents ; for your household stuff
The arches of the bridge are good enough.

XXXIII

Ut pueros emeret Labienus uendidit hortos.
Nil nisi ficetum nunc Labienus habet.

XXXIV

TO JULIUS MARTIALIS

Dear Julius, four-and-thirty years have flown
Since first our love began, and we have known
Delight and mingled sorrow through them all ;
Does not the joy for all the grief atone ?

You doubt it ? Set aside the pearls that mark
The happy days, and by them set the dark
Dull stones that stand for sorrow ; reckon all ;
Which are the more ? Yet life is stern and stark,

And would you guard against its bitterness,
Its sharpest pangs of grief ? Let none possess
The very heart and soul of you, for then
Joy may be marred but sorrow shall be less.

* XXXV

TO CALLISTRATUS

As though you were really the frankest of men
You talk of your amours, the how, why and when.
You are not as frank as you'ld have me believe,
For a lad who says so much hides more up his sleeve.

XXXVI

TO A STINGY PATRON

Because you send a needy friend a pound of plate—or less—
A coat threadbare or cape to wear—is that free-handedness ?
Because a few gold pieces too (how pleasantly they chink)
You sometimes sent—'tis two months' rent—you're liberal, you think.
The rest, 'tis true, give less than you, but generous you are not,
What are you then ? 'Mid meaner men the best of a bad lot ;
Piso I knew, and Crispus too, while yet their fortune stood,
Compared with such you would be much the worst of all the good ;
Let any steed who boasts of speed our thoroughbreds outpace :
'Tis small applause you get because you win a donkey-race !

* XXXVII

THE CRITICAL SENSE

When we say of a critic—' What wonderful *flair* '
We don't to his out-size in noses refer.

* XXXVIII

TO CANDIDUS

There's a fellow just now too well-known about town,
Whom in sedan-chairs we see borne up and down,
With hair black and oily, in bright purple dressed,
Smooth legs, wanton eyes, and a broad hairless breast.
You might think with your wife he some mischief will plan ;
But you need not be frightened—he is not a man.

XXXIX

THE PRETTY FELLOW

I KNOW your name is Prettyman ; but then,
My Prettyman, I hate all pretty men,
For pretty petty poppets are accurst,
And of the lot you, Prettyman, are worst.
'Twere pretty conduct should you grant one boon—
Fade Prettyman, and do it pretty soon !

* XL

TO PONTILIANUS

I DRINK when you're drinking, I sing when you sing,
I praise your poor verse, I believe anything,
You beat me at draughts, and I feign not to hear
When the sound of your wind strikes me full in the ear.
And yet for all this I get nothing. You say—
' There's my will '. I don't want it—but please pass away.

* XLI

TO TUCCA

IT does not suffice you to *be* a gourmet :
You want to be known and to hear what men say.

* XLII

A FASHIONABLE MARRIAGE

AS when a virgin joins a husband's side,
So Afer took Callistratus for bride.
The torches shone, his face was hid by veil,
Nor did the marriage song—' Talassus '—fail.
A dowry too was given, and men say
Rome now is waiting for accouchement-day.

XLIII

Facundos mihi de libidinosis
Legisti nimium, Sabelle, uersus,
Quales nec Didymi sciunt puellae
Nec molles, Elephantidos libelli.
Sunt illic Veneris nouae figurae,
Quales perditus audeat fututor,
Praestent et taceant quid exoleti,
Quo symplegmate quinque copulentur,
Qua plures teneantur a catena,
Extinctam liceat quid ad lucernam.
Tanti non erat esse te disertum.

XLIV

TO UNICUS

I hail you kinsman both in blood and heart,
For kin we are alike in soul and aim ;
You might have matched your brother's loftier art,
But, for his love, that palm you will not claim ;
Aye, Lesbia might have loved you and your fame
Have lured Corinna ; but an humbler part
You chose and still, for brother-love, you deign
To hug the shore who might have sailed the main !

* XLV

TO PHOEBUS

Your temples and bald-pated crown are quite hid
By a skilful contraption of close-fitting kid.
A wit passing by made a charming *bon mot*—
' By Jingo, the man's got his head in a shoe '.

XLVI

THE BUSINESS SENSE

Gallus has sold his songs ! How can you then
Maintain that poets are not business men ?

XLVII

THE DIFFICULT CHOICE

CAPTIOUS, yet kind ; pleasant but testy too ;
I cannot bear to part, or live with you.

XLVIII

HIGH LIVING

I WILLINGLY accept your dainty fare
If hospitality be undesigning ;
Not so, if you imagine that I care
For nothing in the world so much as dining ;
A dozen oysters will not make you heir
To my reputed wealth for which you're pining ;
The feast is elegant ; that I admit
But on the morrow what is left of it ?

Upon the morrow ? Where is it to-day
The moment after it has passed your gullet ?
The broken gobbets all are swept away
By dirty mops, and pork and hare and mullet
Become to dogs and scavengers a prey,
And you to gout—and who can cure or lull it ?
A yellow, pasty face, and tortured feet,
These are the legacies of dainty meat.

Will richest priestly banquets pay for these ?
Were nectar offered me I should esteem it,
At such a cost, mere vinegar, the lees
Of doctored Vatican ; and do you deem it
A likely thing that fare of yours could please
My palate and ensnare me ? Do not dream it :
To me a simple, friendly board is best,
I love the fare I too can give a guest.

XLIX

THE WARDROBE-KEEPER

RICH is the mistress who commits
To you her dainty favourites,
Besides her plate and jewels rare
The curly darlings are your care ;

And, Linus, may she always trust
And think of you as true and just ;
But, Linus, hear me when I pray
And for one moment turn away ;
For I am frenzied with desire,
My very heart and soul afire,
For those dear things—I cannot rest
But long to hug them to my breast,
Those lovely snowy, perfect—girls ?
Oh no, I mean those perfect pearls !

L

SPLENDID ISOLATION

You own a spacious bath that none may share,
And groves of bay and plane and towering pine,
A hundred-pillared portico, where shine
Rich onyx pavements with their dusky glare,
Drives where the clattering hoofs resound, and where
The plashing streams and fountains leap in foam,
But not a chamber for a guest is there—
O gorgeous palace ! Splendid lack of home !

* LI

TO AULUS

It's no use to give friend Fabullinus the office :
A good man, remember, is always a novice.

LII

ON THE GRAVE OF RUFUS

Pieria's garland oft has decked his head,
His eloquence the wondering forum knew,
And now, Sempronia, though his life be fled,
His very ashes glow with love of you.

Now, in Elysium is the story told
And Helen marvels at your nobler heart,
It was for love she fled her lord of old,
You fled your lover, 'twas the fairer part.

Aye, and this greater tale of Troy beguiles
E'en Menelaus to forget the past ;
For as he hears thereof he turns and smiles,
Through you the Phrygian is forgiven at last.

When to the mansion of the blest you go,
Sempronia, no shade shall rank above you,
Such sorrow well Proserpina does know,
And this, your tale, shall win the Queen to love you.

LIII

THE MISER

Though abundant wealth you own—
Such a treasure few have known—
Yet you sit and brood alone
O'er your pelf ;
Like the dragon coiled of old
Round the Colchian fleece of gold,
Every halfpenny you hold
For yourself.
To delude us you romance
On your ' son's ' extravagance,
You may cozen fools perchance,
Though indeed
You are right to say your ' son,'
For your life had scarce begun
Ere your soul begot you one,
Namely greed.

* LIV

TO ZOILUS

With your short stumpy feet and your eyes pink and blear,
Your swarthy complexion and flaming red hair,
If with these marks upon you, you could honest be,
You would seem nothing less than a monstrosity.

LV

GRATIS qui dare uos iubet, puellae,
Insulsissimus inprobissimusque est.
Gratis ne date, basiate gratis.
Hoc Aegle negat, hoc auara uendit
(Sed uendat : bene basiare quantum est !)
Hoc uendit quoque nec leui rapina :
Aut libram petit illa Cosmiani
Aut binos quater a noua moneta,
Ne sint basia muta, ne maligna,
Ne clusis aditum neget labellis.
Humane tamen hoc facit : recusat
Gratis quae dare basium, sed unum,
Gratis lingere non recusat Aegle.

LVI

FULFILMENT

YOU'RE often ill, that hapless friends
May fête you when the danger's past ;
Let the next fever make amends
For former greed, and be your last.

LVII

THE NOISES OF ROME

WHY do I seek my poor Nomentan home
And squalid hearth, my fields by drought oppressed ?
Because I cannot find a place in Rome
Where men as poor as I can sleep or rest.

At early dawn the schoolmasters begin,
By nights the pastry-cooks no respite give,
Smiths make the daylight hideous with their din
Of clashing hammers. What a life to live !

Here is a money-changer ringing coins
Upon his dirty counter—lazy cheat—
Next door the Spanish goldsmith's shop adjoins,
All day the glittering mallets thump and beat.

Bellona's frenzied minions howl and rant,
A bandaged sailor begs, a Jewish child,
Taught by his mother, whines his lying cant,
Blear-eyed match pedlars shout and drive me wild.

But who may count the noises of the Town
That murder sleep ? Nay, you could count as soon
The clashing cymbal-strokes that try to drown
The Colchian incantation to the moon.

But, Sparsus, you can never know such ills,
Softly you lie and lapped in rustic peace,
Your lowest room is far above our hills,
Long ere they reach you noise and clamour cease.

A country house within the city bounds
Your labourers can live within the wall—
With vineyards rich and drives and spacious grounds,
All these are yours and quiet sleep withal.

At will the glaring sunlight you exclude,
Rome throngs about my bed, I start from sleep
To tramping footsteps and to laughter rude,
Till, wearied, to my country cot I creep.

LVIII

A PRETTY PAIR

Says your wife with a sneer, ' You're the lady-maid's dear ',
And she mocks at your conduct as shady ;
But well-matched you must be ; 'tis notorious that she
Is the gentleman's gentleman's lady !

LIX

GREETINGS

Three lustres passed and when, at last, you came again to Rome,
You hoped she might omit the rite of welcoming you home ;
But by the town you're hunted down, and needs must undergo it ;
More kisses there you get than e'er sweet Lesbia gave her poet ;

A tailor's kiss is hardly bliss ; one loves not hairy throats
Of farmers who convey to you a hint—and more—of goats ;
By fullers next your sense is vexed, then hastens to your side
The cobbler, he, apparently, has just been kissing hide—
Now you shall brave a blear-eyed knave : none show you any pity,
And then will come the very scum and refuse of the city ;
The loathly crew so harries you, until you cry ' Alack,
Would I have stayed afar nor paid this price for coming back ' !

LX

ON HIS BIRTHDAY

'Twas on thy morn, thou feast beloved of Mars,
That first I saw the lord of all the stars,
Now on green altars round my rustic home
I pay the dues erstwhile I paid in Rome ;
Forgive the change ; I cannot live a slave,
But would enjoy the life my Kalends gave.
In Rome my birthday made me pale with fear :—
' Alauda loves neat wine—but is it clear
And duly strained ? And has Sabellus got
Mulled wine enough ? I know he likes it hot '.
Between the courses ever on the run,
Receiving or attending every one,
My share of dinner I must sacrifice
To trot about a floor as cold as ice ;
But why for casual guest endure a pain
Which valued patrons would demand in vain ?

LXI

TO LIGURRA

So you pretend to fear you may be hit
By pointed epigrams, the shafts of wit ?
To seem a worthy foeman you aspire,
How vain alike the fear and the desire !
Against fierce bulls the lion's wrath may rise,
He scorns to war with puny butterflies ;
You want a record ? Seek the sots who scrawl,
With chalk or charcoal, filth upon a wall :
But should I deign to brand so foul a knave,
Good heavens ! you might be taken for my slave.

* LXII

THE WELCOME HOME

KING of the former world and ancient sky
With whom no toil disturbed tranquillity,
No bolt fell fierce to punish men for sin,
And earth unriven kept her gold within,
Come, Saturn, to thine own repast of joy
Which Priscus gives to greet his darling boy.
For thou, kind Sire, hast made him safely come
In this sixth winter from old Numa's home.
Seest thou the lavish honours to thee paid,
How like a Roman mart the feast is made
With plenteous cheer and tokens on the board
Which shall a goodly store of gifts afford,
And how to give such worth a greater price
A careful father makes thee sacrifice.
Do thou then, Sire, in this thy bright December
Grant that such days we ever may remember.

LXIII

ON A CORDOVAN PLAGIARIST

CORDOVA, your store of rich olives is more
Than even Venafrum can boast,
You can vie with the best that are brought from Trieste
Or the groves of the Istrian coast ;
Though Tarentum declare that her fleeces are fair
And unrivalled in texture and tone,
Yet they borrow their hue—but more honest are you
And content to exhibit your own ;
So your fame you should guard by reproving your bard
Who is stealing my verse. I confess
That I should not much mind were his own of a kind
That would give me a chance of redress !
But a bachelor's free from reprisals, if he
Run away with your wife, for he's not one,
And ' eye for an eye ' one can hardly apply
To a culprit unless he has got one ;
So a robber may feel more incitement to steal
When there's nothing at all in his purse,
And your poet obscure may be perfectly sure
That no other will pilfer his verse.

* LXIV

A ROUND PEG

A PAGE-BOY whose cheeks did the roses surpass
Cinna sent to the kitchen, the gluttonous ass.

LXV

A DELICATE DAMSEL

PHYLLIS had shown herself to me
As yielding as she well could be,
I thought, shall I reward the fair
With essences or unguents rare,
Fine cloth, perhaps a pretty frock,
Or ' yellow boys ' her purse to stock ?
But, ere I knew, this dainty love
Clung, kissing like an amorous dove,
About my neck, and begged of me
A quart or so—of *eau-de-vie !*

* LXVI

TO AMOENUS

IT cost you a thousand, the house you possess,
And you would be quite willing to sell it for less ;
But you're trying to gull us with tricks, people say,
And disguise its poor rooms with pretentious display.
Your tortoiseshell couches inlaid brightly shine,
And your tables of African citrus look fine,
Your sideboard is loaded with silver and gold,
And your page-boys are quite a delight to behold.
Then you cry out—' Two thousand : it's worth it '—I hear.
Well, with furniture in it, that's really not dear.

* LXVII

TO SILIUS ITALICUS, ON VIRGIL'S BIRTHDAY

THE Ides of May as Hermes' day is known,
The Ides of August Dian holds her own,
Maro has made October's Ides divine ;
To keep that feast and this with his be thine.

LXVIII

A WARNING TO HIS SPANISH FRIENDS

I FLED from Rome and early calls,
So, Spanish friends, I pray you,
Be wise and seek the lordly halls
Of those who can repay you.

I hate the courts, and legal strife
My lazy mind refuses,
For I am getting on in life
And love to serve the Muses ;

Unbroken sleep I love ; the stir
And din of Rome destroy it ;
But I am going back to her
If here I can't enjoy it.

* LXIX

TO PAULUS

YOUR friends are like your pictures and your wine :
All three are old and all are genuine.

* LXX

FORCED SOBRIETY

WHEN his bath-towel by one bow-legged servant was carried,
And a one-eyed old crone watched his gown while he tarried,
And he got his scant oil from a ruptured masseur,
Then Afer could never potations endure ;
And if he saw any one drinking would say—
' Smash the bottle and throw the vile liquor away '.
But since he's been left his old uncle's estate,
I am told from the baths he can seldom walk straight.
Chaliced cups and five slaves have more charm than you think :
While Afer was poor he'd no fancy for drink.

* LXXI

TO LYGDUS

THERE is nothing you do not deny me to-day :
Yet once there was nothing to which you said nay.

LXXII

TO PANNYCHOS

A FIELD and tumble-down abode
Behind the Tombs that line the Road,
  You quit the bar for these!
You earned a decent living when
You harrowed only jury-men,
  And raised a crop of fees,
The Clients paid in kind and you
Had wheat to sell and barley, true
  The profits were not high;
But now 'tis easy to foretell
That all the things you used to sell
  Henceforward you must buy!

* LXXIII

TO CATULLUS

YOU say that you've made me your heir: all the same
I shan't feel too certain till I read my name.

LXXIV

WITH A GIFT OF CHEAP GLASS-WARE

EGYPT shall send you crystal glass, meanwhile
  These cups I bought in Rome perhaps may do;
You know 'tis called 'Bold ware', but would you style
  Me bolder still for sending it to you?

Cheap stuff has virtues, this no thief would think
  Of stealing; boiling water will not mar it;
And then the guest is not afraid to drink
  And servants need not tremble if they jar it;

'Tis nervous hands that let a vessel fall—
  And here again's a point you should not miss—
When toasts are drunk you will not mind at all
  If you should have to break a cup like this.

LXXV

FESTINAT Polytimus ad puellas ;
Inuitus puerum fatetur Hypnus ;
Pastas glande natis habet Secundus ;
Mollis Dindymus est sed esse non uult ;
Amphion potuit puella nasci.
Horum delicias superbiamque
Et fastus querulos, Auite, malo
Quam dotis mihi quinquies ducena.

LXXVI

THE EXCHANGE

WITH his wheat at ten shillings a sack
And wine next to nothing, alack !
No farmer need thirst, all may eat till they burst :
But they haven't a coat for their back.

* LXXVII

AN UNFORTUNATE ACCIDENT

As he stood on his toes with his face turned to heaven,
By an internal tempest poor Aethon was riven.
Men laughed ; but Jove thought that the wind which he broke
Could not be regarded as merely a joke ;
And so as a penalty bade him to stay
And dine by himself for three nights from that day.

LXXVIII

TO BITHYNICUS

I WROTE no libel touching you ;
You say on oath I must deny it ?
No ! there's a better thing to do,
I'll write one now—and justify it.

* LXXIX

TO ATTICILLA

What you ask for I always have given—and more ;
Yet you still keep on asking, the same as before.
If a man does not know when the word should be ' No,'
It means there's no length to which he will not go.

LXXX

TO CALLISTRATUS

All men you praise because you would
Withhold their honour from the good ;
So none are bad ? If that's your view,
Then no one can be good to you.

LXXXI

ADDITIONS

His presents take the ampler shape
His larger means allow ;
Of old he used to send a cape
He sends me capers now.

LXXXII

THE ANGLER

You may struggle as you please to escape Menogenes
In the bath or on the playground ; at a match,
In the hottest game of ball, right and left he catches all,
But he registers to you his every catch.
Or though shod and ready dressed through the dust he runs in quest
Of your football, and politely hands it back ;
Of your towels he will say, ' Oh how snowy-white are they ',
Though a mewling baby's bib is not as black ;
As you comb your scanty hairs, then the parasite declares
The arrangement is the Achillean style ;
Then he mixes your emetic and in fashion sympathetic
Will administer to you that potion vile,
He will mop your brow and tend you if the nauseous draught should rend you—
'Tis compounded from the lees of smoky wine.
When he's lauded and admired everything, till you are tired,
You, from simple boredom, bid him come and dine !

* LXXXIII

KNOW THYSELF

FABIANUS, the terror of men about town,
Was wont once at hernia to jeer,
While, if you were ruptured, the noisiest clown
Could not match the insults you would hear.
But he saw his own figure at bath yesterday,
And now on that subject he's nothing to say.

* LXXXIV

TO THE PAGE-BOY, POLYTIMUS

I THOUGHT it a pity to cut your long hair,
But now I am glad that I granted your prayer.
Like to this was young Pelops when for his fair bride
His ringlets clipped short showed his ivory side.

LXXXV

PEDICONIBUS os olere dicis.
Hoc si, sicut ais, Fabulle, uerum est,
Quid tu credis olere cunnilingis ?

LXXXVI

TRIGINTA tibi sunt pueri totidemque puellae :
Una est nec surgit mentula. Quid facies ?

LXXXVII

ON COTTA

ONCE to excuse his lack of shoes, his servant he'd condemn,
And say his slaves, the careless knaves, were always losing them.
—His slaves forsooth ! In simple truth he had but one, no more,
And he must shout and rush about as though he were a score—
A further plan now—guileful man !—his cunning executes ;
Barefoot he goes, we may suppose, lest he should lose his boots !

* LXXXVIII

ON A CRITIC

TONGILIANUS is most keen of scent :
But all his efforts on his nose are spent.

* LXXXIX

TO CHARINUS WHO CONCEALED HIS BALDNESS WITH BANDAGES

A BAND round your head you continually wear :
It is not your ears that are wrong, but your hair.

XC

INDEMNITY

HIS friend was old and sick ! and Maro made
A vow for him—for he was like to die—
And said if heaven the burning fever stayed,
A victim should be given to Jove on high ;
The crisis passed : the leeches testify
That all is well—the fever's course is run—
So Maro makes new vows wherewith to buy
Indemnity against the former one.

* XCI

TO MAGULLA

SINCE with your husband everything you share,
His bed and board—and eke his minion fair—
Why have another page-boy when you sup ?
Ah yes, I see : there's danger in the cup.

XCII

RIDDLES

WHAT should I be if great and rich ?
That is the sort of question which
One cannot prophesy on ;
Apply it to yourself : e.g.,
What sort of lion will you be
If you become a lion ?

* XCIII

THE GO-BETWEEN

LABULLA'S invented a curious play,
Her lover to kiss when her lord's in the way.
She kisses her zany a hundred times over,
And wet from her mouth he goes straight to her lover,
Who adds a few more from his own eager lips,
And back to his sly smiling mistress he slips.
And so it goes on. But between you and me,
What a very big zany the husband must be!

XCIV

THE COPYIST

I TOOK to Epic; you began it too;
I ceased, because I would not vie with you.
The tragic buskin then my Muse puts on;
Forthwith the robe of tragedy you don.
I thought to tune the sweet Horatian lyre;
You snatched the plectrum, seized with like desire.
Satire I tried; then Satire was your aim.
I sang light elegies; you did the same.
I sought with simple epigrams to charm;
And you would rob me of my humble palm.
Pray curb this greed; say what you *don't* affect,
And leave to me *one* style that you reject!

XCV

MUSAEI pathicissimos libellos,
Qui certant Sybariticis libellis,
Et tinctas sale pruriente chartas
Instanti lege Rufe; sed puella
Sit tecum tua, ne thalassionem
Indicas manibus libidinosis
Et fias sine femina maritus.

XCVI

Cum tibi nota tui sit uita fidesque mariti
Nec premat ulla tuos sollicitetue toros,
Quid quasi paelicibus torqueris inepta ministris,
In quibus et breuis est et fugitiua Venus ?
Plus tibi quam domino pueros praestare probabo :
Hi faciunt ut sis femina sola uiro ;
Hi dant quod non uis uxor dare. ' Do tamen ' inquis
' Ne uagus a thalamis coniugis erret amor '.

XCVII

Vxor cum tibi sit puella qualem
Uotis uix petat inprobus maritus,
Diues nobilis erudita casta,
Rumpis, Basse, latus, sed in comatis,
Uxoris tibi dote quos parasti.
Et sic ad dominam reuersa languet
Multis mentula milibus redempta ;
Sed nec uocibus excitata blandis,
Molli pollice nec rogata surgit.
Sit tandem pudor aut eamus in ius.
Non est haec tua, Basse : uendidisti.

XCVIII

THE NEW RULER

O Baetis, olive-crowned, whose waters clear
Transmute to gold the fleeces of thy sheep,
Thou stream to Bacchus and to Pallas dear,
Now, Albula, the mistress of the deep,
Sends Rufus to thy shores : these may he keep
In happy fortune through the coming year—
Hard task !—as Macer kept them ; he hath weighed
The burden and he takes it unafraid.

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